■ Lifestyle / C2
Home for the holidays exhibit for family togetherness

■ Across / A16
Cops seize P13.6B in 'shabu' ingredients

■ News / A2
RP gov't can't appeal US court settlement for Marcos victims

■ Business / B1
Drop in local oil prices seen in early 2005

■ News / A5
New star witness in Nida murder presented to media

■ Entertainment / A26
Pirates feast on FPJ death

Belgian in 'cybersex' case released; Jamby raises hell

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINE National Police lost a potential victory against the growing domestic "cybersex" industry when, unbeknownst to many, government prosecutors dismissed a complaint against an alleged foreign operator of a pornographic site here.

BELGIAN/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
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Erap in Hong Kong says GMA is very afraid of him

ENSCONCED in his Hong Kong hospital room-with-a-view, ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday accused the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo of being mean and fearful of him as he prepared for knee surgery this week.

Officials "did not even let me spend Christmas with my 99-year-old mother. They are

ERAP/ A4

25 Filipinos feared dead

Tsunami death toll could top 100,000

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—Disease epidemics could double the death toll in Asia's tidal wave catastrophe, which already stood at nearly 70,000, experts warned as history's biggest ever relief operation sputtered to life against enormous odds Wednesday.

Thousands of corpses were rotting in Indonesia's tropical sun as many who escaped death in the worst tsunami in recorded history faced a fight for survival against hunger and disease.

Food and medicine were already desperately short in many stricken areas and Guido Bertolaso, an Italian civil emergency chief who is coordinating European Union rescue operations, warned the overall death toll could surpass 100,000.

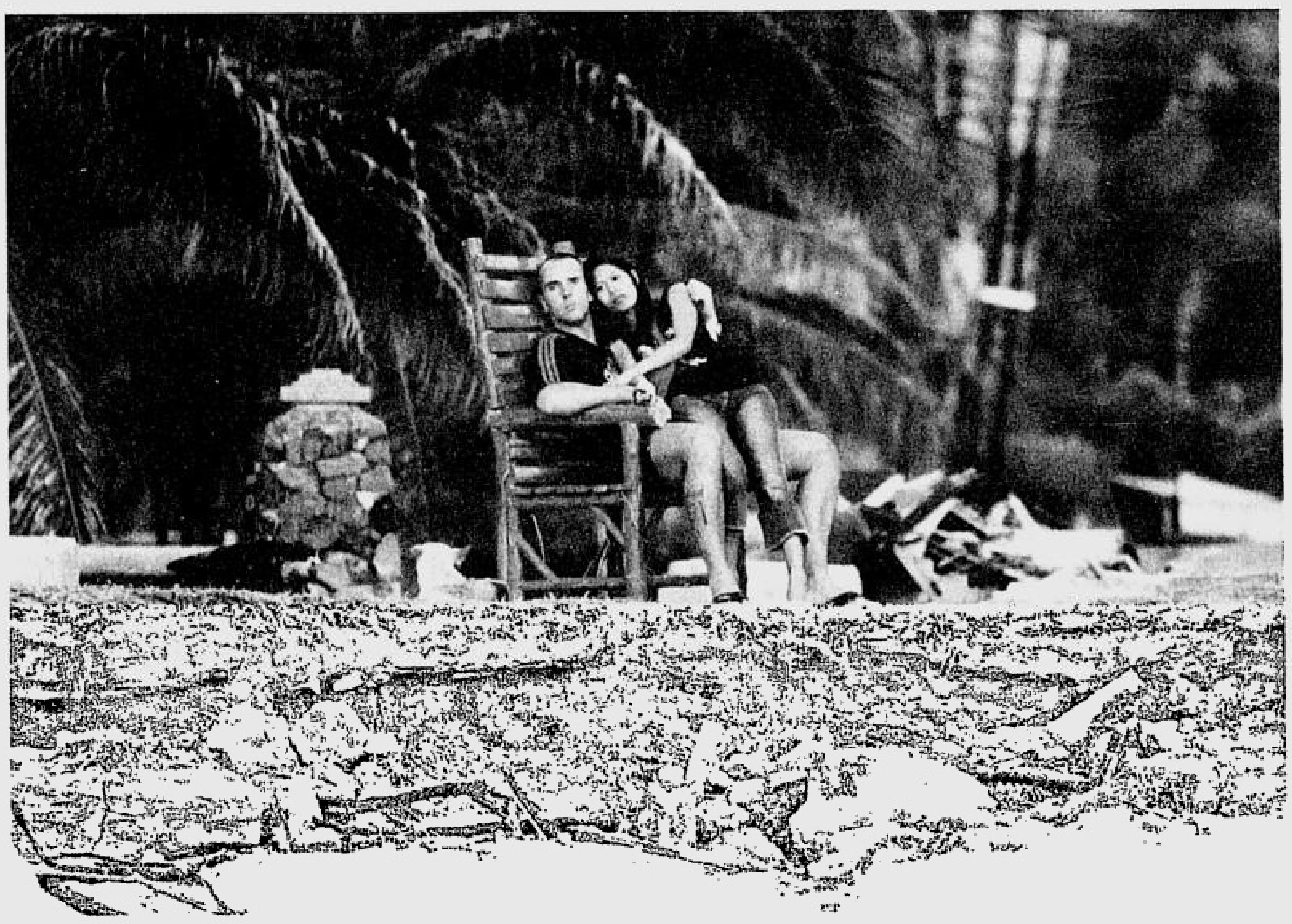
Up to five million people have been left without the resources for daily life, lacking either water, food or basic sanitation, UN officials said.

Indonesia has suffered the biggest number of victims. The death toll in Aceh province might reach between 50,000 and 80,000, Michael Elmquist, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Indonesia, told reporters.

"It's a guess based on the relation between the numbers we have so far and our experience from other earthquake disasters," he said, adding that the coastal town of Meulaboh alone may have had 40,000 deaths.

Survivors told harrowing tales

TSUNAMI/ A6



LOVE among the ruins: Robert Simmons from London and his Thài girlfriend, Da, take time out from the tragedies they have seen on Patong Beach in the Thai resort island of Phuket to watch the sun set following the devastation of the island. But it isn't quite over yet. Tsunami-shattered beach hotels on the mainland north of Phuket continue to yield bloated, gashed and mangled bodies. REUTERS

Thai, Indian kids pull off survival miracle

BANGKOK—The Thai boy, aged 4, survived for more than two days without food and water by hanging onto a tree. The Indian girl, 13, came through by clinging to a door wrenched from a house and floating in stormy seas.

Given up for dead, Vathanyu Pha-opas has been reunited with his parents after monster waves hit southern Thailand and coastlines in Asia and Africa, killing tens of thousands of people.

"It is a miracle that he is alive and still asks for sweets and biscuits. I don't know how he managed to survive with only minor bruises and some mosquito bites," Vathanyu's father, Suthipong Pha-opas, said yesterday.

"I had given up hope of seeing him again."

Suthipong, 26, said his son was playing near their flimsy wooden house on Sunday when the tsunami waves smashed into Khao Lak, a popular mainland resort north of Phuket. More than 1,000 Thais and foreign tourists were killed there.

"I was convinced I'd lost him because he could not swim," the fisherman said from a hospital where the boy was under observation.

"I was out five miles offshore in a boat with a friend when the big waves hit. We floated in the sea four or five hours before being rescued," Suthipong said.

In India, 13-year-old Meghna Rajshekhar disappeared along with 77 other people when the giant tsunami struck an Indian air force base by the sea on the remote Car Nicobar island.

Locals found Meghna walking in a daze along the beach on

THAI/ A6

14 others missing, 4 injured in Thailand

By TJ Burgonio

IVY CATHERINE Tomenio, along with her Japanese husband and their three young children, left their hotel in Phuket, Thailand, that Sunday morning to see the island's famed beaches when the killer waves came.

The 32-year-old Ivy, from Borongan, Eastern Samar, and her family were never seen again but the hotel vehicle they took was found, wrecked and stripped of its parts.

A woman's body, which Filipino diplomats said resembled Ivy, was inside it.

The Samareña was among the 10 Filipinos listed as missing in the massive waves that ravaged coastlines in Asia and killed tens of thousands of people. *(Story on this page.)*

At press time, the death of a Filipino has been confirmed by Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque—that of 19-year-old Sharleen May Tan. Asuque, however, did not give additional details about Tan.

Tan was earlier identified as the daughter of Rosemarie Phi King Ang-Tan, who was among the Filipinos brought to hospitals in Phuket for treatment of wounds sustained during the tsunami. Ang-Tan's husband, David, is also missing.

Also in the hospital were Marco Sangil, who was set to be repa-

25 FILIPINOS/ A6

LIFE-SIZE mannequin of Jose Rizal inside the two-story museum in Intramuros commemorates the national hero and his pivotal role in the fight against colonial oppression. ERIK ARAZAS

Plaque to mark HK home of Rizal today

By Ambeth Ocampo

IT IS unfortunate that ousted President Joseph Estrada's knee surgery will probably take what little attention in media would be left for a simple ceremony that will be held today on Shelly Street, in the busy Hong Kong district better known to Filipino shoppers as Central.

This afternoon at 3 p.m. the Antiquities and Monuments Office of Hong Kong will unveil a commemorative plaque that marks—both in English and Chinese—the site of Rednaxela (that's Alexander spelled backward) Terrace where Jose Rizal, his parents, elder brother and spinster sisters lived in 1891-92.

From extant calling cards on display in Fort Santiago, we know that Rizal practiced general medicine and his specialization, ophthalmology, at two addresses in Hong Kong—first in a room in a lodging house on No. 2 Duddell St., which according to the historian Austin Coates, was not an ideal place for a clinic.

He practiced there from 10-12 in the morning. Later, he moved to a better part of town at No. 5 D'Aguilar St. where he practiced afternoons from two to six. Both structures have since given way to modern buildings but the site on D'Aguilar Street, now a small commercial building, is also

PLAQUE/ A4

UMASA SA SARILING SIKAP!

Bishop: New year, same old problems

By Blanche S. Rivera

MOVE on but don't expect anything from the government next year.

This was the unsolicited advice yesterday from Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz who urged Filipinos to rely on their own abilities to build a better life for themselves.

"Far be it for the Filipino to depend on the government. Otherwise, he would be in for a big frustration and deep despair. Time and again, the government proved to be undependable

BISHOP/ A4

Rizal's lesson: Breaking down walls of the mind

By Jerome Aning

JOSE Rizal, the martyred national hero whose 108th death anniversary the nation observes today, believed that invisible walls had to be first torn down before a nation could truly achieve the goals of genuine freedom, unity and progress.

A year-old museum in Intramuros, the Old Walled City, remembers in a unique way Rizal's efforts to break the barriers that prevented the Filipinos from struggling for self-determination and a better life during four centuries of Spanish rule.

The Intramuros and Rizal Light and Sound Museum, operated by the Department of Tourism, gives new meaning to the terms Walled City and Bagumbayan, a flourishing native "new town" south of Intramuros where Rizal Park now stands, which the Spanish demolished in the mid-18th century.

Here visitors may appreciate Rizal's ideas about the Filipinos' need for psychological freedom if they were to break free from the bonds of colonialism.

A taped running commentary, strategically placed lighting and speakers, wall paintings, life-size dioramas and moving mannequins all combine to help visitors appreciate and understand the life of Filipinos from pre-Hispanic times to the end of Spanish rule in 1898.

The symbolism becomes a bit heavy, if not didactic, in the hour-long audiovisual presentation.

The museum's manager, Roberto Celis Jr., said the script of the audio-visual presentation would be revised soon to correct certain "inaccuracies" that have displeased some Filipino historians and Spanish diplomats who have visited the museum.

The museum exhorts Filipinos to "lift the veil and break the walls that have perpetrated the victimization of our minds, our hearts and our souls so that we may be liberated to create a society that is enabled, ennobled and free."

RIZAL'S LESSON/ A4

Second FRONT PAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with brief rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/12/30/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

US COURT RULING

RP gov't can't touch Marcos money

THE PHILIPPINE government cannot appeal a victims' class-action settlement against the estate of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the US federal appeals court ruled on Tuesday.

The decision by a three-judge panel of the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals effectively blocks Philippine government access to some $683 million currently being held in escrow in the Philippine National Bank and any other Marcos assets currently being held in banks around the world.

It is also the latest episode in a long-running legal battle dating back nearly two decades against Marcos who fled to Hawaii in 1986 and died three years later.

In 1994, a US federal jury in a class-action suit in Hawaii awarded $2 billion to nearly 10,000 victims after finding the Marcos estate liable for the torture, murder and disappearance of Filipinos during Marcos' rule.

Because of the tangled legal battle that followed the ruling, the claimants agreed in 1998 to a $150 million pay-out to end all claims. The money was not paid, however, as litigation continued.

The money was to be drawn from Marcos deposits in Swiss banks, including Credit Suisse, worth about $590 million, which the government also claimed on grounds they were part of assets Marcos had illegally amassed while in office.

Amid the court battles in US and Philippine courts, the Philippine government challenged the $150 million settlement.

The 9th Circuit ruled on Tuesday, however, that the Republic of the Philippines did not have a say in the matter.

"Because the Republic is neither a party to the settlement agreement nor a person or banking institution bound by the Order Directing Compliance, we dismiss its appeal for lack of standing," wrote Judge Susan Graber.

There has been no official estimate of the size of the Marcos fortune, but Imelda Marcos, the flamboyant former first lady, said in 2002 that her family could be worth more than P500 billion ($12.6 billion).

The freeze order on the Marcos assets was first issued in 1986 and reaffirmed in 2003 by federal Judge Manuel Real, who is presiding over a class-action lawsuit filed by some 10,000 Filipinos who won a $2 billion judgment against the Marcos estate in 1995.

The award has grown to $3.7 billion with interest, but none of the victims has received money.

"It's a nice victory for the victims," said Jon Van Dyke, an attorney representing the class-action. *Reuters, AP*

KINGDOM OF A HIGHER WORLD

Lucid Insights From The Blind

By Rev. Jesmael M. Montaña

A single event can awaken within us a stranger totally unknown to us. To live is to be slowly born. -- ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

After chugging down three bottles of beer in a noisy bar, **Olan dela Cruz** decided to go on a jaunt with his friend. The night was still young, the city was bustling. He felt like drowning amidst the hum of the crowd's revelry in the dead of the night. The riotous din of Valentine's Day contributed more to the yearning locked away inside him.

A Ride Into Darkness. He took a cab and sat on the front row's passenger's seat. His friend sat behind. He was in a tizz and he desperately needed to get out of that carousing pack. He reclined his seat. He was bone tired but he did not want to go home. He wanted to roam the streets and look for some innocent boys to prey on. The younger the better.

Thirty-year-old Olan was deep in homosexuality. Molested by their neighbor at the tender age of six, his early sexual experiences led him to a secret life of wanton looseness. He wretchedly wanted to unbind the chains of lust that engulfed him. Yet he seemed vulnerable against its power that corroded his inner man. His family, even his friends from church, knew he was gay. What they did not know was that he was slipping down into pedophilia.

The city lights flickered as the cab zoomed the streets. Olan squinted, the glint was too bright. He shut his eyes one last time. Then the loud screech. Followed by a big crash. Olan's world suddenly turned pitch black.

A View Of The Past. Olan was eight years old when his father unexpectedly passed away. Although Olan was an illegitimate child, his rich father made sure that he and his sister were well-provided for. But they were left with virtually nothing when their father died. Surprisingly, the abrupt change in Olan's once privileged life pushed him to study harder. More so, it drove him to work intensely. He went into all sorts of jobs to help his mother keep food on the table and clothes on their backs.

Despite the difficulties he went through, Olan remained in his school's honors list. He vowed to be rich, powerful, and famous someday. He graduated valedictorian in elementary and finished salutatorian in a science high school in their province. He went to U.P. Los Banos to take up a course in Biology. But Olan had to quit school when his left eye was severely injured after he exchanged blows with his half-brother during a heated argument. Money was tight and he decided to work as an errand boy in his half brother's beauty salon. It was there that Olan discovered a latent gift — haircutting. Olan found his passion and he learned the trade quickly. His talent was honed when he moved out of his brother's salon and worked under the renowned hairstylist and beauty expert, Fanny Serrano.

A Close Encounter With Success. Olan looked up to Fanny. His life-long dream was to become rich and famous like him. More than skill though, Olan learned about life. He was introduced to a Bible study that taught him about the saving grace of God. Later on, he joined a support group that helped him overcome his struggles with homosexuality. His spiritual journey, however, was an uphill battle. He was constantly losing the fight against lust. Maybe he was not really serious about changing. He wanted to get rich more than anything else. It did not take long before Olan hit it big. He put up his own parlor. He was steadily moving toward success. Celebrities began to notice his skill. Slowly but surely, he began carving a name in the beauty salon world.

Olan's dream was without doubt higher than his reach. He just did not want to be famous locally, he wanted to be known internationally. He saved up to study in the most prestigious hair school in Asia. His goal was almost within his reach. He will soon live in pleasurable ease. Yet in spite of everything, something was amiss. Olan wanted to be right with God. Could He plug the hole in Olan's heart?

A Bleak Prognosis. The doctors said his eyes were gravely injured. His vision was permanently impaired. The cab he was riding smashed into a ten-wheeler truck, the driver was decapitated. It was providence that Olan reclined his seat or he would have lost his head too. His friend at the back seat managed to survive the accident with minor bruises.

The weeks that followed were dark and bleak. Olan's friends from the support group faithfully visited him in the hospital. They took turns reading to him passages from the Bible to keep him up. A strange vigor in excitement was rising up within him. He had this uncanny sense of hope. He told the doctor that he would be able to see again.

A deep distress has humanized my soul. - WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Never mind if the doctor said he would be blind for life. Olan was happy. Finally, he was contained by an incomprehensible peace. Is this what he has been hearing from Bible teachings all along? It felt so real and wonderful; he would not trade it for anything else, not even his eyesight.

It is only with the heart that one sees rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye. - ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

A Life Restored. Olan was astonishingly in a positive mood when he was discharged from the hospital. He felt God was telling him that he would "see" again. It was an insensible belief, but soon Olan realized that he would actually "see" with his spiritual eyes. It was far more wonderful than he could ever imagine. A Christian friend gave him Braille materials to aid him in reading the Bible. Olan was thrilled. Soon he could read using Braille. And for the very first time in his life, he was able to read the Bible from cover to cover.

Back then when he could see, he would not even budge to read it, he rarely prayed and talked with God. He was a fighter. He thought he would win life's battles even without God's help. But blindness brought him to a deeper relationship with God. It was the most liberating experience he ever had. He was now a renewed man with a fresh sense of purpose. Olan now felt complete. He has been freed from the chains of lust. He was freed from his emotional dependency. He felt even better that in his own way he was dispelling darkness in this sin-crazed world.

And just when he thought his haircutting career was over, a friend from church asked him to give her a haircut. She did not care how her hair would turn out. Unexpectedly, her hair looked great! Her act caught on. Olan's other friends did the same. Later on, Olan went on to learn how to use the computer. People from the media heard about it and Olan's commendable story landed on several TV shows. Olan's tale of human triumph over adversity is one for the record. Yet unlike a sordid tale gone victorious on a melancholic TV soap, Olan's life is actually a story of man's journey towards the heart of God. And like Olan's words in the song he composed after his accident, *"life with Christ is indeed so right, so bright, so free."*

"Adversity introduces a man to himself."

A Blind Who Could See. Another blind person who made her mark in history was **Helen Keller.** She was not born blind. When she was 19 months old a disease took away her sense of sight and hearing. Despite her disability, she was able to reach stratospheric heights of accomplishments. She was fluent in three types of Braille —English, American, and New York Point. With the assistance of these "languages," she learned to master French, Latin, German, and Greek. After attending various special schools for the deaf and learning to speak, Helen tackled the seeing world, attending the Cambridge School for Young Ladies, and then graduating with honors from Radcliffe College in 1904. She loved poetry and memorized volumes of her favorite books.[1] She said, *"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."* Life is not a matter of what happens to us but rather what happens inside us.

A Look Within. With the tragedies that hit our country recently, one is tempted to question one's faith. Some of us may be going through a personal, financial, emotional, or relational crisis of our own and may be starting to doubt whether we can truly celebrate Christmas and face the New Year. But Olan's story reminds us of the incomprehensible ways of God. Scripture says that God's ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts. In the midst of the darkness we face is a higher purpose, a higher goal. God desires that his children realize the primacy of a life that is changed in a process. Jesus himself emphasized that if our eye causes us to stumble, we should pluck it out. Though not literal, it's true that oftentimes unless we reap the consequences of what we sow, we will sink deeper into the quicksand of depravity and wantonness.

"God doesn't want our success; he wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; he demands our obedience."

When we see our countrymen justifying acts of stealing the wood and the nails holding our railroad tracks, and involving themselves in illegal logging, bribery and corruption, we painfully realize that our soul must be seriously damaged and would not be healed by our external religiousness.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
- 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

Olan's story and the recent storms remind us, Filipinos, that God is holy and that whatever we sow, we reap. That no man is an island; and that we are interconnected in more ways than we realize. These are calls to turn from our ways and to turn to Him for the power to change. And this is the hope of Christmas.

Lord, I'm at the end of all my resources.
Child, you're just at the beginning of Mine.
- RUTH HARMS CALKIN

...The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- ISAIAH 7:14

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
ISAIAH 9:6

To everyone, a Higher World Christmas and a Hope-filled New Year!

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[1] Sharpening the Sword. A Call to Strong Leadership by Stephen D. Hower Copyright © 1996 by Concordia Publishing House. USA

PCGG placed under land reform agency

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has reportedly placed the Presidential Commission on Good Government under the expanded Department of Land Reform.

The President's rationale for the transfer, according to a Cabinet source, was that all ill-gotten wealth recovered by the PCGG from former President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies would be used for agrarian reform projects.

The Department of Land Reform was formerly the Department of Agrarian Reform, which Ms Arroyo has expanded to also handle urban and ancestral lands.

The President announced PCGG's being an attached agency of the Department of Land Reform during a Cabinet meeting last week, according to the Cabinet source.

There was no immediate comment from PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac about the President's announcement.

But other PCGG officials said the PCGG's functions are out of sync with those of the former DAR's.

PCGG was the first agency that former President Corazon Aquino created when she assumed office in 1986 after the fall of Marcos.

The PCGG, which continued the criminal and forfeiture cases against the Marcoses and their cronies, has remained under the Office of the President.

DAR was created by Congress in 1987 to oversee the flagship program of the Aquino administration.

Under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, all recovered Marcos ill-gotten wealth should go to agrarian reform.

Through a presidential order in October, Ms Arroyo renamed DAR and expanded its scope to include not only agrarian lands, but also the urban lands and those for cultural minorities.

The new department will house all other agencies involved in land reform, urban land reform and ancestral domain determination, according to Malacañang.

Illegal Pinoys urged to avail of amnesty

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment yesterday called on illegal Filipino immigrants in Kuwait and Malaysia to avail of the ongoing amnesty programs for undocumented aliens there that would end tomorrow.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said those who voluntarily leave the two countries before the amnesty deadlines expire would be spared the hassles and avoid penalties such as detention, caning, deportation and blacklisting.

In Malaysia, Sto. Tomas said thousands of undocumented workers have voluntarily returned since the amnesty began on Oct. 29. More than 900 overseas Filipino workers in Kuwait have also returned home.

Kuala Lumpur has given the estimated 1.2 million illegal migrants from different countries, including Filipinos, only until Dec. 31 to leave Malaysia.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2005, Malaysian police and immigration authorities as well as 25,000 "civilian volunteers" would launch an all-out effort to ferret out illegally staying foreigners.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman also appealed to the relatives in the Philippines of those illegally staying in Malaysia to remind their loved ones of the deadline lest they face up to 10 months in jail and a fine equivalent to P50,000.

The Philippine Embassy and Philippine Overseas Labor Office have sent mobile assistance teams throughout Malaysia's 16 states to assist affected Filipinos who want to avail of the amnesty.

Most of the undocumented Filipinos in Malaysia reportedly come from Tawi-Tawi, Sulu and Basilan in Mindanao.

According to Soliman, the Malaysian government has assured those leaving within the amnesty period that they would be allowed to return to that country once they had secured the proper visas and work permits.

Many illegal immigrants risk staying in Malaysia because they face unemployment here. *With a report from Volt Contreras*

Number of gov't advisers, managers cut, says Bunye

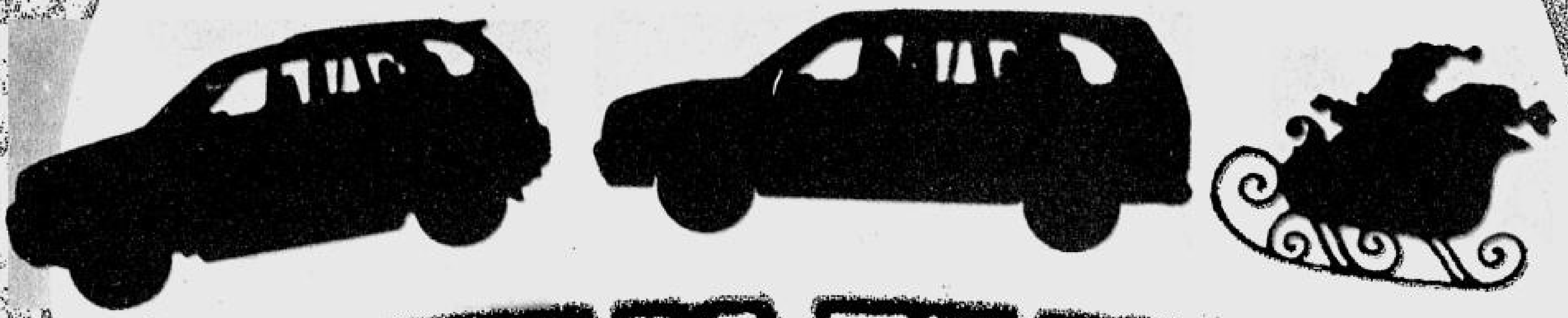
MALACAÑANG yesterday said the government has reduced the number of management and advisory positions this year despite the rash of new posts created and new appointees named by President Macapagal-Arroyo in the first six months of her new term.

In a radio interview, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that "if we net out the positions that were abolished or merged against the new appointments, we would still have a net reduction in the number of various offices and agencies."

The updated directory of Malacañang officials contained over 30 new presidential advisers and assistants in the Office of the President.

Bunye said all appointees would get a regular paycheck from the government while some would get perks such as a fully-staffed office that was approved on a case-by-case basis.

Bunye said that the new appointees and offices created by President Arroyo did not go against the grain of her administration's austerity program (which included the abolition or merger of government positions) because the government was able to keep below its budget deficit target. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*



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VX200 2.4 DSL M/T (Leather)	958,000	100,000	75,612	52,119	41,267	29,731	24,258	20,587	19,309
SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	67,342	46,416	36,782	26,500	21,622	18,335	17,196
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	62,921	43,370	34,371	24,763	20,205	17,131	16,067
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	90,000	60,215	41,505	32,895	23,699	19,337	16,395	15,376
GL 1.8 GAS M/T	698,000	80,000	51,500	35,349	28,023	20,189	16,473	13,963	13,096
DLX 2.4 DSL M/T	690,000	80,000	53,242	36,698	29,063	20,938	17,084	14,496	13,596
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (12.07%)	663,000	80,000	48,583	33,173	26,301	18,948	15,460	13,103	12,290
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (50%)	663,000	331,500	27,625	18,417	13,856	9,890	8,037	6,776	6,336

RAV4 FINANCING SCHEMES

VARIANT	SRP	LOW DP	12	18	24	36	48	60	72
4X4 A/T	1,268,000	100,000	104,473	72,011	57,281	41,065	33,506	28,444	26,678
4X2 SV M/T	1,048,000	100,000	84,626	58,331	46,401	33,266	27,142	23,041	21,610

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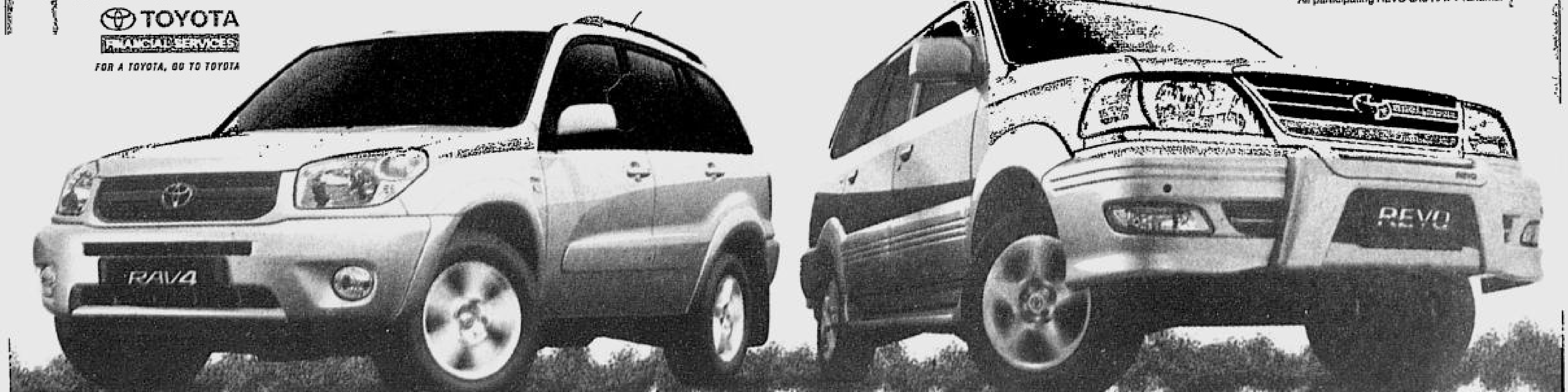

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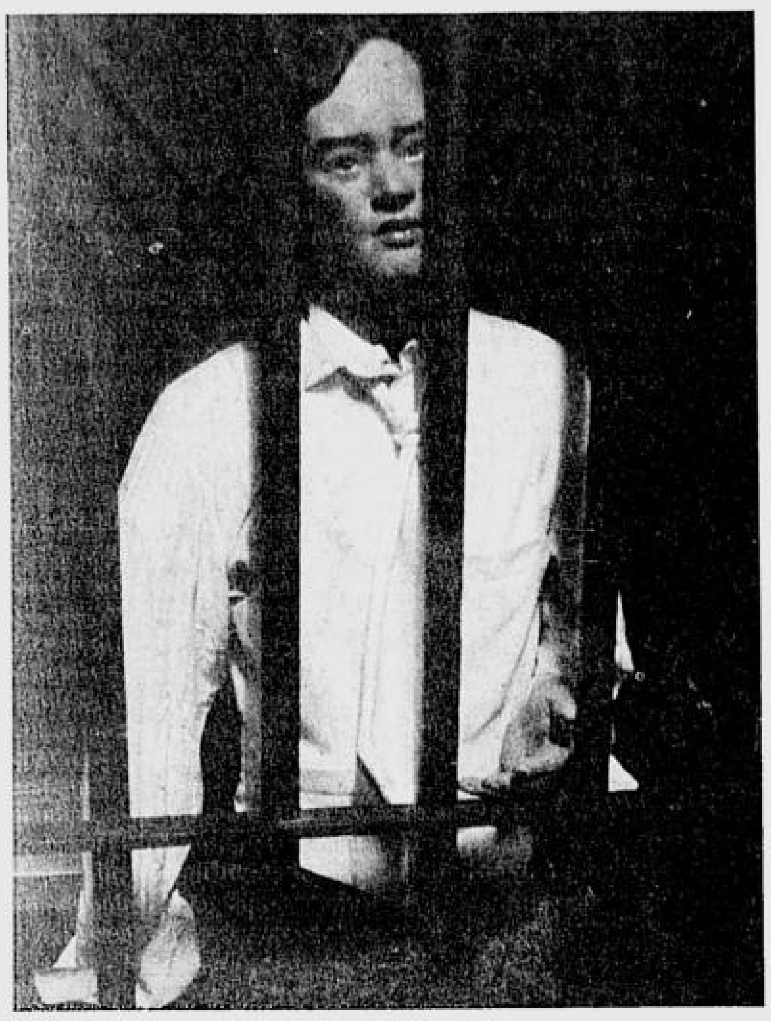
Rizal's lesson: Breaking down walls of the mind



THE NATION remembers today Jose Rizal's 108th death anniversary and his uniquely significant contributions to break down the barriers that prevented Filipinos from determining their own fate. ERIK ARAZAS

From page A1

Intramuros, Spanish for "Within the Walls," the fortress-like city that served as the capital of Spanish colonial Philippines, is made out to be the symbol not only of Spanish might but also of the "limits to potential" imposed on the psyches of the native Filipinos, called indios by the colonialists.

Bagumbayan, founded by former residents of Maynilad, the settlement that was conquered and on which the foundations of the city of Manila were laid, becomes not just a symbol of the free state that the Filipino revolutionists in 1896 aspired to but also of "an attitude of trying to break free."

'Horizon-chasers'

Linking the two concepts is Rizal. Through education and self-reliance, the hero broke through the walls of ignorance and indolence to became a "horizon-chaser," in the words of the former tourism secretary and now senator Richard Gordon, whose brainchild the museum is.

Straddling the western ramparts of Intramuros, the two-story museum on Sta. Lucia Street is located where the Beaterio de la Compañia de Jesus, the religious congregation founded by Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, once stood.

Celis and an 11-person staff run the museum which opened in November 2003. Most of the staff work as tour guides while the rest are researchers.

Celis said tourists from the nearby Clamshells, the DOT center for cultural exhibitions, and students on field trips are frequent visitors.

Many foreign dignitaries have also visited the museum. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who toured the museum in November 2003, likened the sufferings of the Filipinos under Spain to those of his countrymen under Russian rule.

Celis said there are plans to set up a souvenir shop by next year.

A dozen chambers

Inside the building, visitors walk through at least a dozen chambers depicting how life in the archipelago was like before and after the coming of the Spanish colonizers.

They can see how Rizal, through his writings, fought the colonial oppression and discrimination that Intramuros symbolizes.

One chamber showcases the richness and diversity of pre-Hispanic Philippine culture: the Manunggul Jar and Palawan's Tabon Cave, the Ifugao Rice Terraces and the early Muslim trading communities of Sulu and Mindanao.

A video presentation shows the arrival in 1521 of the first of the Spanish conquistadors under Ferdinand Magellan and their subsequent defeat in the hands of Lapu-Lapu in the battle off Mactan island.

Depicting the period of permanent colonization is the chamber made out to resemble the interior of the flagship of the conquistador Miguel Ruy Lopez de Legazpi, who established and expanded Spanish rule in the archipelago in the late 16th century.

Another room depicts the construction of Intramuros, a medieval architectural wonder erected in a period of three years with the use of Chinese and Filipino labor.

Europe in Asia

Still another chamber portrays Intramuros as a piece of "Europe in Asia" where the Spanish ruling class lived and Western culture thrived. Native Filipinos were forbidden from entering except for those serving the colonial masters.

One chamber illustrates how the ecclesiastical authorities transformed the new colony into a "nation of prayer and song," with the commentator bewailing how "we consigned ourselves to faith, for we have lost faith in ourselves."

Another chamber purports to show how the civil authorities economically exploited the natives through the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, commercial monopolies, over-taxation and forced labor.

The commentary reminds visitors that walls as sturdy and occlusive as those of Intramuros also existed in the minds of Filipinos, preventing their unifica tion and growth as a nation.

Failed rebellions

Depicted in a row of statues occupying one large chamber are the leaders of the series of failed rebellions, among them Magat Salamat, Sumuroy, Francisco Dagohoy, Hermano Pule, Gabriela Silang and Sultan Kudarat.

The greater part of the museum deals with Rizal's "psychological triumph" over the Spanish conquerors through a narration of his life and work, from his childhood to his execution by firing squad in Bagumbayan Field in 1896.

Wall paintings depict Rizal's early education under his mother, his studies at the Ateneo Municipal and University of Sto. Tomas and his departure for Europe.

Plaque to mark . . .

From page A1

marked with a plaque from the Hong Kong Antiquities Office.

Rizal had a steady clientele that allowed him to pay his bills and live comfortably with his family.

In Hong Kong, he was soon known and referred to as "the Spanish doctor." (Having taken specialized courses in eye surgery in Paris and Heidelberg, Germany, after completing his medical courses in Madrid, he was known in the Philippines as "the German doctor" or "el doctor aleman" that was later corrupted and popularized by common folk, who called him "Dr. Uliman.")

Place of refuge

Joseph Estrada follows a long list of personalities seeking refuge in what used to be the British Crown Colony. Hong Kong was also the place of refuge for Emilio Aguinaldo and a large entourage that included Gregorio del Pilar and Pedro Paterno. The present Philippine flag follows a design made by Aguinaldo and executed in 1898 by Marcela Agoncillo, also in Hong Kong. Apart from being a shopping mecca for Filipinos and place of work for domestic helpers, Hong Kong is also part of Philippine history.

Rednaxela Terrace is no more but the site that will be marked with a commemorative plaque will remind the Chinese that sometime in the past, heroes lived in exile in their land.

It was here that Paciano Rizal translated "Noli Me Tangere." The manuscript was corrected by Rizal himself and could be the definitive translation but was unfortunately lost. It was here that Rizal began a third novel after "El Filibusterismo." He completed only a few chapters, but it is significant because he tried, but failed, to write in the language of his country—Tagalog—instead of Spanish.

From this home, Rizal also explored the possibility of settling down in Sandakan, British North Borneo, with countrymen evicted in Calamba following an agrarian dispute. It was in Hong Kong that he drafted the constitution of the Liga Filipina, which he founded on his return to Manila in 1892. But the group disbanded following his exile to Dapitan and evolved into the radical Katipunan under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio.

Fighting words

Sensing arrest and execution in 1892, Rizal wrote two letters in Hong Kong that he left with a neighbor, Dr. Lorenzo Marques, with instructions they be opened after his death. He had planned too far ahead for he was executed four years later on Dec. 30, 1896. The fighting words still ring:

"I know that, at present, the future of my country gravitates in part around me; that with my death, many would rejoice, and that consequently, many are longing for my end. But what am I to do? I have duties of conscience above all else ... I wish to show those who deny us patriotism that we know how to die for our duty and for our convictions. What matters death if one dies for what one loves, for one's country and for those whom he loves?"

"...I have always loved my poor country and I am sure that I shall love her until my last moments. Perhaps some people will be unjust to me; well, my future, my life, my joys, everything I have sacrificed for love of her. Whatever my fate shall be, I shall die blessing my country and wishing her the dawn of her redemption."

Erap to visit?

The example has been set and we hope that the man with the repaired knees will visit Rednaxela Terrace in Hong Kong and then return to the Philippines to face the music.

Belgian in 'cybersex' case released

From page A1

The case against Belgian Roland Thys, who allegedly operated a "cybersex" den in Barangay Malabanias in Angeles City, Pampanga, did not even reach trial.

Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group raided the cybersex den last Oct. 4, and rescued at least 15 girls, aged between 15 and 23, that they found in five studios there.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal, who had exposed Thys' alleged operation of an Internet site involved in the online trafficking of women and children, angrily charged into the PNP's Camp Crame headquarters yesterday, explaining that she only learned of the dismissal of the case that day.

The case against Thys had been filed before the justice department by the PNP's investigation unit, the CIDG.

'Insufficiency of evidence'

On Nov. 2, state prosecutors Stewart Allan Mariano and Jose Dumangas dismissed the CIDG complaint for "insufficiency of evidence" and ordered the release of Thys.

"After carefully evaluating the evidence adduced by the complainant, we find that there exists no probable cause to indict respondent for the crime charged," Mariano and Dumangas said in their resolution.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, the CIDG officer-in-charge, said his office immediately appealed the dismissal last month.

Overwhelming evidence

"We can't understand how the case got dismissed despite the overwhelming evidence," Madrigal said at a press briefing after conferring with CIDG officials.

Madrigal said Thys allegedly trafficked in children and women through the Asianbabes.com Internet site that he operated.

The racket allegedly involved hiring girls to pose nude before video cameras. The images were then made available for viewing for a fee on the Internet.

"We feel the Department of Justice has committed an irregularity," Madrigal said.

After the briefing, Madrigal phoned Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and urged him to look into the matter.

Quoting Gonzalez, she said the DOJ would summon Mariano and Dumangas.

Madrigal said she would seek a Senate inquiry into child and women trafficking cases allegedly being neglected by government prosecutors.

Protecting syndicates

"Instead of protecting women and children, they're protecting leaders of syndicates," she said.

Citing the provisions of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, or RA No. 9208, Mariano and Dumangas said that mere possession of accessories used in the illegal activity of child pornography was not sufficient to elevate the case against Thys before a court.

Seized during the raid of the cybersex den allegedly operated by Thys were sex gadgets like dildos and vibrators, and several computer sets, including video cameras.

The cameras were allegedly used to market the young girls who had been hired as sex models on the Internet.

"While it is clear that respondent has been found in possession and custody of pieces of equipment which can be indubitably considered as paraphernalia in the commission of trafficking and pornography, he cannot be indicted for violation of RA 9208," Mariano and Dumangas said.

They said the law did not provide that mere possession or custody of the equipment and articles seized during the raid was by itself punishable.

'Mere possession'

They said indicting Thys for mere possession of the seized items would be tantamount to "expanding" the scope of the law.

Bishop: New year, same old problems

From page A1

as well as unpredictable," the archbishop said.

A Social Weather Stations survey showed that while 81 percent of Filipinos were hopeful about 2005, the number of Filipinos welcoming the new year with hope has declined over the years.

Of the 1,200 respondents, 30 percent said they expected their lives to get worse while 25 percent said they expect to have improved lives.

"The coming year may be new but the problems are the same—if not much worse," Cruz said.

Look after yourself

"The conclusion is obvious: It has become incumbent for the Filipino to take care of himself, his family, his loved ones. Ultimately, the Filipino will find a more tenable hope in the employ of ... private initiatives, not in sporadic public interventions and selective official acts of the government," he said.

Cruz, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said people should not count on new promises the Arroyo administration would dish out because its 2004 pledges have yet to be fulfilled.

"The passing year is difficult. The coming year is not promising either. The government has not even started to deliver any of its loudly proclaimed '10-Point 2004 Agenda.' In fact, it has embarked in a different direction ... the 2004-2005 Tax Agenda," Cruz said in a statement.

"That is why there is the emerging perception that instead of helping the people, their government is in effect making it harder for them to go on with their lives," the prelate said.

Malacañang has succeeded in pressing Congress to pass at least one of the eight tax measures it proposed as necessary to pull the Philippines out of its fiscal predicament.

Congress, just before taking the Christmas break, approved a bill raising the excise taxes on tobacco and liquor products.

Cruz noted that the government was too busy overcoming all kinds of crises and threats of destabilization to give priority to the welfare of its constituents.

'Leadership crisis'

The archbishop maintained that the fiscal crisis is not yet over, contrary to the official pronouncement of Malacañang.

The country's bishops have said the fiscal problem stemmed from a moral crisis in governance, or what Cruz branded as "a leadership crisis in the national level."

"This is why the government appears to be preoccupied with its own survival," Cruz said.

Erap in Hong Kong says GMA is very afraid of him

From page A1

very mean," Estrada said from his hospital bed, with a view overlooking the Hong Kong skyline.

Still wearing his trademark white wristband with the presidential seal, Estrada claimed the only reason Ms Arroyo was keeping him under house arrest was because he was still hugely popular and could launch his own "people power" movement similar to the one that forced him out in 2002.

'Constitutional clock stopped'

The 67-year-old former actor who arrived in Hong Kong on Monday with an entourage that included family members to undergo knee surgery, scheduled for Thursday, has been on virtual house arrest on corruption charges.

"This administration, even a small rally in support of me, they tear gas, they use water cannons," he told The Associated Press.

"They are very, very afraid," he said.

"The constitutional clock in the Philippines stopped when I left (office)," he added.

Four police escorts stood guard outside his private hospital room at Hong Kong's Adventist Hospital, where he puffed on cigarettes.

Critics charge he made a deal with his successor to leave, which he denied.

'That girl'

"I would never strike a deal with this regime," said Estrada, who referred to the President as "that girl."

Estrada accused the prosecution of dragging its feet on his case because there was no evidence against him.

State prosecutors allege that while in office, Estrada amassed about P4 billion in illegal gambling payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed away in secret bank accounts. He has denied any wrongdoing.

In a statement sent from Hong Kong, Estrada's spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen described Estrada as being in "high spirits and shows strong determination to overcome another big fight."

He said Estrada had exhibited "no fear" of the impending operation.

His doctor, United States surgeon Christopher Mow, said his condition was "very, very serious."

Estrada said that he would head home once he recovered from the surgery. He said tests would continue today.

Medical furlough

Estrada's medical furlough, which the Sandiganbayan antigraft court granted on humanitarian grounds, is turning into a New Year's Eve family reunion away from home.

Yesterday, opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada left the country to join his father and other family members, including his mother and sister, a day after securing permission from the Sandiganbayan.

The young Estrada, who is out on bail as a co-accused in his father's plunder case, left for Hong Kong on board a Philippine Airlines flight at about 3 p.m., said Ferdie Ramos, a media coordinator for the ex-President.

Estrada said it was the first time in nearly three years that he had been able to gather with several family members.

Four grandchildren are also in Hong Kong, and they played in a room next to Estrada's.

Abusing the treatment

An administration congressman deplored Estrada's attack on the President, saying the ex-President was "out of touch" with political reality.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. also chided Estrada for abusing the humane treatment being accorded him by the Sandiganbayan antigraft court.

Pichay pointed out that it was Estrada's failure to appreciate the political reality which led to his ouster.

"As former President, Mr. Estrada should know about the separation of powers. The Sandiganbayan's rulings are not President Arroyo's rulings so why blame her for his misfortunes?" he asked.

He reminded Estrada that he was being tried for plunder, a capital offense, and that the government and the courts had given him adequate protection and consideration befitting his former status.

"He's enjoying his rest house while others are in congested jails. He should save his breath for his defense," Pichay said.

Instead of continually attacking the government, Estrada should focus on his knee surgery and then the defense of his cases, he said.

Preferential treatment

"Truth to tell, the government has acted with compassion and understanding on Erap's numerous requests which have so far included his knee surgery, maternal visit, rest house arrest and attendance at Fernando Poe Jr.'s final services," Pichay said.

Such consideration by the courts almost created a rift between the President and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, a principal witness in the case against Estrada. Singson deplored the preferential treatment allegedly being given his former friend.

"But instead of showing a gesture of appreciation and gratitude to the Arroyo administration, Mr. Estrada has responded with an array of cheap shots," Pichay said. *AP with Volt Contreras and Cynthia D. Balana*

New witness in Nida slay case shows up

By Philip C. Tubeza

A NEW star witness in the murder of actress Nida Blanca was presented to the media by the Department of Justice yesterday.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the witness, midwife Andrada Dalandas, was put under the government Witness Protection Program.

"Her testimony will break open this case," Gonzalez said.

Lawyer Harriet Demetriou, counsel of Blanca's daughter Kaye Torres, said she was convinced that Dalandas, 32, was a credible witness after hearing her narration of what she saw on the morning of Nov. 7, 2001, when Blanca was murdered at the Atlanta Center Building in San Juan.

"I believe her. I interviewed her for three-and-a-half hours. This is major piece of the puzzle," Demetriou said.

She said that Torres was hopeful that Dalandas' testimony would help in the extradition of Rod Lauren Strunk, Blanca's American husband and the principal suspect in the gruesome murder, who had gone to the United States.

"She is hopeful that Mr. Strunk would finally be extradited back to the country," Demetriou said.

Gonzalez said the DOJ was also trying to convince two more possible witnesses to testify, including a man who saw Blanca leave the Atlanta Center Building hours before she was found dead.

LAWYER Harriet Demetriou (left) escorts witness Andrada Dalandas. RYAN LIM

The male witness allegedly saw two men and a woman fetch Blanca after she left the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board office in the building at 5:08 p.m. on Nov. 6.

"We still have another witness. He saw Nida leave the building. However, he is still (in the provinces right now)," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez said that Dalandas would execute her sworn affidavit before National Bureau of Investigation officials this morning.

He earlier revealed she had positively identified Strunk as one of the four men present when the actress was transferred from a van into her car, a Nissan Sentra, at the carpark on Atlanta Center Building's sixth floor.

Gonzalez said the witness also identified, through NBI pictures, one of Strunk's three companions—who transferred Blanca to her car, where she was later found dead.

The government had charged Strunk and Philip Medel Jr. before the Pasig City Regional Trial Court for the actress' killing.

Strunk left the country on Jan. 21, 2002 to tend to his ailing mother in California. He had since refused to go back to the Philippines, saying he would not get a fair trial here.

ho ho ho!

BDOpen for the holidays

DECEMBER 24, FRIDAY

9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Aurora Blvd
Baclaran
Carmen Planas

9:00 am - 4:00 pm
NAIA

9:30 am - 2:30 pm
Bonifacio Global City
Cebu-Elizabeth Mall
Cubao SM
Echague
Makati SM
Mall of Asia
SM Delgado

10:00 am - 3:00 pm
All SM Mall Branches

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All Sunday Banking Branches are open

9:00 am - 6:00 pm
NAIA

10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Mega B L/G

DECEMBER 27, MONDAY

8:00 am - 2:00 pm
Carmen Planas
Tabora

8:30 am - 2:30 pm
Baclaran
Bacoor
Calamba
Legaspi City
Lucena
Marikina
Marcos Highway
Naga
San Pedro

9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Alabang
Aurora Blvd.
Cainta
Kalentong
Libis
Mall of Asia
Pasig

9:00 am - 6:00 pm
NAIA

9:30 am - 3:30 pm
Cubao SM
Makati SM
Echague
SM Delgado
Bonifacio Global City
Cebu-Elizabeth Mall
Tutuban

10:00 am - 4:00 pm
All SM Mall Branches

DECEMBER 30, THURSDAY

8:00 am - 1:00 pm
Carmen Planas

9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Aurora Blvd.

9:00 am - 4:00 pm
NAIA

9:30 am - 2:30 pm
Bonifacio Global City
Cebu-Elizabeth Mall
Cubao SM
Echague
Makati SM
SM Delgado

10:00 am - 3:00 pm
All SM Mall Branches

DECEMBER 31, FRIDAY

8:00 am - 1:00 pm
Cebu-Tabunok

8:30 am - 1:30 pm
Bacoor
Baclaran
CDO Cogon
CDO Xavier
Cebu-Magallanes
Dagupan
Davao-Monteverde
Iloilo-Iznart
Iloilo-JM Basa
Legaspi City
Lucena
Marcos Highway
Marikina
Naga
Rizal Avenue
San Pedro
Tacloban
Tarlac
Tomas Morato
Zamboanga

9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Alabang
Aurora Blvd.
Baguio-Session Rd.
Caloocan
Greenhills
Head Office
Libis

9:00 am - 6:00 pm
NAIA

9:30 am - 2:30 pm
Bonifacio Global City
Cebu-Elizabeth Mall
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PJI cleared of ₱111-M tax liability

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER returning the Philippine Journalists Inc. to its private owners, the Supreme Court has cleared the publishing firm of its P111 million tax liability to the government.

In a 16-page decision issued on Dec. 16, the tribunal invalidated the Bureau of Internal Revenue's deficiency assessments on PJI, worth P111,291,214.46, for having been made outside the three-year prescriptive period for the BIR to make a tax assessment.

The tribunal reversed a Court of Appeals ruling and reinstated the decision of the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA), which held that the waiver signed by PJI for the statute of limitations under the National Internal Revenue Code was invalid.

"A waiver of the state of limitations under the NIRC, to a certain extent, is a derogation of the taxpayers' right to security against prolonged and unscrupulous investigations and must therefore be carefully and strictly construed," said the decision written by Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago.

"The waiver of the statue of limitations is not a waiver of the right to invoke the defense of prescription as erroneously held by the Court of Appeals," it added.

The high court said the CTA was correct in finding that the waiver signed by PJI comptroller Lorenza Tolentino on Sept. 22, 1997 was not valid since it does not conform with Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 20-90, the implementing provisions of the NIRC on the period of prescription for the assessment and collection of taxes.

The tribunal said the waiver lacked "a definite agreed date between the BIR and the PJI" within which BIR may assess and collect revenue.

Waiver defective

It noted that the waiver was also defective since it was signed only by a revenue district officer and not by the BIR Commissioner.

Court records showed that PJI had declared a net income of P30,877,387 in 1994 and paid P10,247,384 in taxes after deducting its tax credits for that year.

However, the BIR informed PJI that it still owed the government a total of P127,980,433.20 after the revenue agency examined the publishing firm's books in August 1995.

The BIR on Aug. 29,1997 invited PJI to an informal conference for the publishing firm to controvert the proposed assessment. PJI comptroller Tolentino then signed the waiver on Sept. 22, 1997.

On Dec. 9, 1998, the BIR issued an assessment demand finding PJI liable for P111,291,214.46 in deficiency taxes, "inclusive of interest and compromise penalty."

Despite PJI complaints about the assessment, BIR Deputy Commissioner Romeo Panganiban issued a warrant of distraint and/or levy in March 2000.

The PJI then filed a petition for review before the CTA, which granted its appeal on May 14, 2002.

However, the Court of Appeals on Aug. 5, 2003 reversed the CTA's decision. The PJI then went to the Supreme Court.

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Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

History of tsunamis: Krakatau to Mindanao

WASHINGTON—The tsunamis that claimed thousands of lives across the Indian Ocean are the deadliest great waves in more than a century and probably in modern history.

More than 36,000 people were killed by tsunamis following the explosion of the volcano Krakatau in the Sunda Strait near Java on Aug. 27, 1883.

The toll from Sunday's tsunamis has now topped 68,000 deaths in 11 nations.

Following the 1883 eruption, waves estimated as high as 27 meters slammed ashore on nearby islands, wiping out coastal communities in what is now Indonesia. They had been the deadliest tsunamis of modern times until now.

The earliest description of a tsunami-type wave comes from 479 BC in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. Similar waves have been reported worldwide, though they are more common in the Pacific, with its earthquake-prone perimeter.

Over the centuries, Japan has been the land most plagued by tsunamis, with at least 66,000 deaths recorded there since AD 684.

Mindanao tsunami

Among the deadliest tsunamis was one that struck Honshu, Japan, in 1896, killing an estimated 27,000.

Many coastal residents were in the streets celebrating a holiday when the wave struck. The next day, fishermen returning home found a scene of devastation, strewn with bodies and ruined homes for miles.

Other notable tsunamis have included:

- Aug. 16, 1976: A tsunami generated by a quake on Mindanao in the Philippines killed between 5,000 and 8,000 people in the Moro Gulf region.

Destructive quakes

- March 28, 1964: A magnitude 8.4 quake in Alaska generated tsunamis that caused damage in southeastern Alaska, in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and in the states of Washington, California and Hawaii. More than 120 died.
- May 22, 1960: The largest earthquake—magnitude 8.6—of the 20th century occurred off the coast of south central Chile. It generated a Pacific-wide tsunami, which was destructive locally in Chile and throughout the Pacific Ocean. The tsunami killed an estimated 2,300 people in Chile.
- Nov. 4, 1952: A strong earthquake off the coast of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula generated a great, destructive Pacific-wide tsunami, causing considerable damage and loss of life.
- Aug. 13, 1868: A massive wave struck Chile, carrying ships as far as 4.8 kilometers inland at Arica. Deaths totaled 25,000 or more.

AP

25 Filipinos feared dead in Thailand

From page A1

triated to Manila; Margaret Ang Choi and Virginia Cruz (earlier identified as Vergini Cruz and Miss Virginia).

Sixteen other persons with Filipino-sounding names have been confirmed dead, the Department of Foreign Affairs said, based on lists given by the Thai Ministry of Interior. Four other Filipinos were injured.

The Agence France-Presse, quoting DFA officials, said up to 25 Filipinos were feared dead and 14 others missing from the giant waves that swamped southern Thailand and Indian Ocean countries.

There have been no reported Filipino casualties or disappearances, so far, in other tsunami-damaged nations like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and Maldives, the DFA said.

Ivy, her husband Masahiro Terasaka, 39, sons Mahito, 9, and Yukihito, 6, and daughter Mayumi, 3 months old, were believed to have been hit by the tsunami on their way to Khaolak Beach.

"The bodies of the four other family members, or that of the vehicle's driver, have not yet been found," Asuque said.

The Terasakas, who arrived in Phuket on Dec. 24, have been declared missing by the Japanese Embassy.

Positive identification

Their hotel vehicle, with the woman's body inside, was found on a road that runs from Phuket to Khaolak. Also inside was Masahiro's luggage.

Pending positive identification by her family, Ivy will remain on the missing list.

"Secretary Alberto Romulo today expressed his sadness and concern over reports that a Filipina and her entire Japanese family may have perished from the tsunami," Asuque said at a press briefing.

Between 70 and 120 Filipinos are based in Phuket, working as diving instructors, hotel staff and musicians.

Ivy's sister, Yvonne Tomenio-Catuday, was to fly to Singapore to meet with officials of Sumitomo Forestry, her brother-in-law's employer, and would later proceed to Phuket to help identify the body found in the wrecked vehicle.

The missing

Also listed as missing by the DFA were Sherlyn Tan, Alexander Latoza, Alma Gillado, Flordeliza (Dianne) Isla, Jerwin Sedillo, Joselito A. Balbutin, Marcial Ferre and Marian Pasag.

One of them was a seaman while the others were described as tourists and musicians.

Are they Filipinos?

Nine others—Beverly Tan, Catherine Prieto, Celeste Panahon, Cherry Panahon, Erwin Raagas, Jovito Masaga, Lorena M. Burlaza, Pilar Prieto and Reginaldo Recibio—survived the tsunami in the island resort.

They were either tourists or hotel staff, according to officials.

The Thai Ministry of the Interior has provided the DFA with a new list of eight fatalities whose names sounded Filipino to the Philippine Embassy in Thailand, bringing to 16 the number of such cases.

Documentation needed

The new list included the names Andees Barona, Mariana Barona, Eileen Chan, Giner Salello, Giovanni Cabrera, Ilse Panaino, Katrin Lorente and Maria Novello.

"Again, the DFA will be looking at its records to ascertain the nationalities of these Filipino-sounding names," Asuque said.

Officials stressed that it had not been verified if anybody on the earlier list of eight casualties with Filipino-sounding names was actually Filipino.

"We don't have any callers who identified that they are related to the eight," said Marianito Roque, head of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. "That means there's a high probability that they're not Filipino nationals. But we're still waiting for calls from the relatives."

The names on the first list were Barrera Juan (earlier identified as Barrera Jann), Carlos Barong (Curlos Barong), Sesilvia Bargoa, Flona Gallan, Feri Cornelia, Major Tomas, Mary Tanagtong and Sevrine Patruno (Sevrine Pairuno).

'Miraculous survival'

"We're now looking at authentication documents, and we hope we could find something there. Also, we're coordinating with [the National Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Immigration] to find out whether any of these names are in their records, thereby assisting us in establishing the nationalities of these Filipino-sounding names," Asuque said.

Two Filipinos—Bacoleño musician Rolando del Castillo, 56, and co-worker Nenette Malinao, 38, of Cagayan de Oro—escaped death when waves hit their hotel in Maldives.

Del Castillo, a vocalist-sequencer at the Club Med in Maldives, and Malinao were on the first floor of the hotel shortly before the tsunami came.

They moved up to the second floor of the guest-packed hotel when the tsunami struck, badly damaging the first floor.

Del Castillo narrated his story in text messages to his daughter Ivory Lucasan, who in turn told dyEZ Aksyon Radyo in Bacolod of what she believed was the miraculous survival of her father.

"God is really with us because he placed us on the second floor," Del Castillo was quoted by his daughter as saying.

Del Castillo has been performing in various Asian and Middle East countries since the early 1980s. He was in Phuket last year and moved to Maldives in May this year, his daughter said. ***With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Norman Bordadora, Michael Lim Ubac, and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

A HAVEN for tourists, Phuket turns into a graveyard where 1,430 people were estimated to have been killed, among them more than 700 tourists. AFP

Even the VIPs from Europe hit

PREMIUMS paid for proximity to the sea meant that some of the region's wealthiest tourists were the most vulnerable in Asia's tsunami disaster.

The dead included relatives of the well-known and the unknown.

British actor Richard Attenborough lost two members of his immediate family in Thailand, including a 14-year-old granddaughter, who was found dead, and her mother, Attenborough's daughter, who is missing.

The former German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was evacuated Tuesday by helicopter from a hotel in Sri Lanka.

The fashion photographer Simon Atlee was swept away in the Thai resort of Phuket. His companion, Petra Nemcova, a Czech model who appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated's swimsuit issue last year, survived after clinging to a tree.

New York Times News Service

Pagasa's hope: ₱17-M upgrade

THE P17 MILLION allocated by Malacañang for the upgrade of the country's generally outdated weather forecasting equipment will be used mainly to rehabilitate decades-old radar systems and repair damaged weather stations in Aurora and Quezon, according to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

"This will already result in a marked improvement in weather forecasting and monitoring. Pagasa's services will be better," said Dr. Prisco Nilo, Pagasa officer-in-charge.

Environmental issues

A brand new Doppler radar reportedly costs P35 million.

Nilo, however, said that Pagasa would continue to lobby Congress and other government agencies for more financial support to come up with the counterpart fund for its six-year, P2.7-billion modernization program.

The weather bureau is expecting a loan from Japan to fund the modernization plan which would install forecasting and analysis facilities in areas outside Metro Manila.

The tsunami disaster has prompted lawmakers to make environmental issues among their priority concerns next year.

Proposed bills on environmental protection and conservation will take precedence over other issues such as health, population, defense and political reforms, said Senators Manuel Villar and Richard Gordon.

Eye-opener

"The recent calamities should be an eye-opener to all of us. It seems like Mother Nature is sending us a message. Environmentalists have been warning us about the severe consequences of our wanton neglect and abuse of our natural resources," said Villar.

Gordon said a total ban on commercial logging should not be the only measure to save the remaining virgin forests in the country. He said the government should also allocate enough funds to conduct massive reforestation in the next 10 years or so.

Tsunami death toll may reach 100,000

From page A1

of the moment the tsunami, up to 10 meters high, struck towns and resorts, sucking holidaymakers into the sea, surging through buildings, sweeping cars from roads and smashing a train off its rails.

Sunday's giant waves, which swallowed coastlines in an arc of death striking from Indonesia to Sri Lanka and beyond to Africa, killed more than 68,000 people.

It is feared that rotting corpses, smashed sewers and contaminated water combined with a lack of food and shelter, along with mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria, could wipe out weakened survivors in the tens of thousands.

"The immediate terror associated with the tsunamis and the earthquake itself may be dwarfed by the longer term suffering of the affected communities," said David Nabarro, the top official at the World Health Organization dealing with humanitarian crises.

Biggest relief operations

"There is a chance that we could have at least as many dying from communicable diseases as we had dying from the tsunami," he said as the horrors from the waves of death that engulfed wealthy tourists and the poor alike continued to be revealed on coastlines around the region.

The task of preventing this second wave of suffering is daunting and unprecedented. UN disaster relief coordinator Jan Egeland said relief operations would be the biggest in history. He urged the immediate burial of human victims and the disposal of dead animals before they infect drinking water.

Yvette Stevens, UN Assistant Emergency Relief aid coordinator, said the international aid needed for the areas around the Indian Ocean was likely to exceed the previous record UN appeal of $1.6 billion.

Rebels announce truce

"We face a huge challenge due to the vast area affected," Markku Niskala, secretary general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said in Geneva, adding: "We haven't even seen the tip of the iceberg yet."

While the aid organizations made their plans, governments around the world pledged cash and dispatched ships and aircraft on rescue and relief missions, the millions of bereaved and homeless faced a seemingly hopeless task of rebuilding their shattered lives.

Nearly half of the confirmed dead were in the Indonesian province of Aceh, close to the epicenter of the biggest earthquake in 40 years which sparked the tsunami waves that devastated coastal villages and resorts across the Indian Ocean.

In Aceh, separatist rebels announced a truce while people searched for loved ones.

Nearly 22,000 were confirmed dead in Sri Lanka, while tolls continued to tick up in India, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives and Burma.

Train hurled away

In Sri Lanka, hundreds of people were killed when a wave crashed into a train traveling to Galle from Colombo, wrecking carriages and uprooting the track it was traveling on. The train was called "Sea Queen."

Thousands of European and American tourists remained unaccounted for and the toll rose with virtually every report from the 10 countries afflicted from Malaysia to Somalia on the African coast.

Tourists from several Asian countries were also unaccounted for.

Children suffered most

Carol Bellamy, executive director of the UN Children's Fund (Unicef), said children made up a large proportion of the dead.

"Children can run, but they are less able to hold on, to withstand flooding waters," Bellamy said.

She said children could account for up to a third of the dead.

All 135 children at an orphanage in Sri Lanka run by Tamil Tiger women rebels were killed.

The stench of death hung over provincial capital Banda Aceh as survivors struggled to dig graves in tropical heat. About 2,000 bodies were buried in mass graves, but many rotting corpses remained on the streets.

"If within three to four days relief does not arrive, there will be a starvation disaster that will cause mass deaths," chief police detective Rilo Pambudi said in an e-mail message released by officials in Jakarta.

Around the region, mass burials were under way with little formality but accompanied by huge outpourings of grief from people who had lost their entire families, homes and livelihoods.

Supermodel recounts horror

At least 700 foreign tourists were believed among those killed in Thailand.

Survivors evacuated from stricken areas told of the full horror wrought by waves up to 10 meters high that tore babies from the arms of their parents and carried children and the elderly out to sea.

Czech supermodel Petra Nemcova escaped being swept away by clinging to a palm tree for eight hours at the Thai resort of Khao Lakuntil until she could be rescued, her publicist said.

"People were screaming and kids were screaming all over the place, screaming 'help, help.' And after a few minutes you didn't hear the kids any more," Nemcova told The New York Daily News from her hospital bed in Thailand.

The US military said it had diverted an aircraft carrier, other ships, at least 20 aircraft and thousands of sailors and Marines to the affected Asian countries, pledged an initial $35 million in aid and denied a suggestion by a UN official that it was "stingy."

Earth shaken from axis

US scientists said the 9.0-magnitude quake that set off the killer wall of water had permanently moved tectonic plates beneath the Indian Ocean as much as 30 meters, slightly shifting islands near Sumatra.

It may also have made the earth wobble on its axis.

The stench of decomposing corpses spread over the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, and fresh water, food and fuel were running short. Many in the city feared fresh quakes and tsunamis, and roads were filled with people trying to leave.

Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurer, estimated the cost of the devastation at more than $13 billion. Indonesia said the cost of rebuilding Sumatra would be $1 billion.

Wrecked economies

"A lot of the economies, or sectors of the economies, of the affected countries have been close to destroyed and it is going to require a great deal of rebuilding and a great deal of investment," said Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer.

India's overall toll of nearly 12,500 included at least 7,000 killed on the remote Andaman and Nicobar islands. On one island , the surge of water killed two-thirds of the population.

In Thailand, many west coast resorts were turned into graveyards.

In a French-run hotel at Khao Lak, up to half the 415 guests were believed killed. A reporter from France's Europe 1 radio said many bodies had been found in their rooms.

Throughout the region, more than 3,500 foreigners were unaccounted for, among them at least 1,500 Swedes, 800 Norwegians, 214 Danes and 200 Finns.

'Divine message'

Survivors in the deeply Islamic province of Aceh saw the catastrophe as a divine message to end the province's long-running conflict.

"I felt that this disaster was God's warning to Acehnese and Indonesians that we should get our acts together and learn the message behind this calamity," said Imran Hamid, 55, searching for his missing sister.

AFP, Reuters, AP

Thai . . .

From page A1

Tuesday after clinging to a door on the heavy seas for two days, the Hindustan Times reported.

Waves saved girl

The air force officer's daughter and her parents were swept away along with countless thousands of others as a massive earthquake off neighboring Indonesia sent tsunami crashing across the Indian ocean.

"She told defense personnel that she had cried out 11 times when choppers hovered over the ocean in search of survivors on Sunday," the daily quoted a flight lieutenant as saying.

"No one spotted her."

Meghna, badly bruised, told rescuers she knew in which direction land lay and just kept floating on toward the shore.

"In the end it was the waves that washed so many thousands of others away that washed her ashore," the Hindustan Times said.

Parents didn't make it

The miracle girl also had to keep an eye out for numerous sea snakes.

Meghna was taken to relatives in Hyderabad after medical treatment, Lt. Gov. Ram Kapse said.

"Her parents, sadly, haven't survived."

The 76 others are still reported missing. The Press Travel of India said 100 people perished at the base.

At least 4,000 lost their lives in the Andamans chain of 572 islands, but many thousands more were feared dead, officials said.

The Nicobar group, with a population of about 350,000, lies about 150 km from Sumatra.

Reuters, AFP

Ruling on SMC, UPCB shares lauded; Danding denies making claim

By Cynthia D. Balana and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's allies in Congress yesterday lauded as "a victory of the people" the Sandiganbayan decision upholding the government's control over the "coco levy"-funded shares that cronies of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos acquired in San Miguel Corp. (SMC) and United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB).

For his part, SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's lawyer, Estelito Mendoza, said yesterday that his client had never claimed owning the 27 percent bloc of SMC shares that the Sandiganbayan had handed over to the government.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco and Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier said that with the court's ruling, Congress must now prioritize amendments to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) to enable the government to use the coconut levy funds for other purposes such as compensating human rights victims during martial law.

In its decision, the Sandiganbayan rejected for lack of merit the bid of Cojuangco to regain control of major stakes in SMC and UCPB which were allegedly acquired with the levy collected from the coconut farmers.

The Sandiganbayan's decision came three years after the Supreme Court ruled in December 2001 that the coco levy funds were public funds.

Javier said that while under the law the funds should go to support agrarian reform, part of the money could be used for infrastructure projects such as farm-to-market roads and irrigation facilities and to provide loans to farmers.

"The government can identify how the fund can be used after the court maintained that the Coconut Industry and Investment Fund (under which the shares were bought) is owned by the government," Javier said.

In a written statement furnished to newspapers, Mendoza said the ruling did not involve Cojuangco's 20 percent share of San Miguel but the shares of the coconut farmers which Cojuangco never staked a claim on.

With regard to Cojuangco's SMC shares, he said, the Sandiganbayan on Dec. 10 denied the motion filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to declare the shares as having been acquired using coconut levy funds.

Mendoza added that in so far as the ruling involving Cojuangco's UCPB shares, he had yet to receive the court's decision.

The anti-graft court, upholding previous decisions, said in two rulings that the government owned the disputed stake in SMC and 95 percent of UCPB since it was holding all of the shares in trust for the farmers. *Reuters*

GMA calls special session

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has called Congress to a three-day special session at the start of the coming year to approve at least one of the administration's proposed new tax measures.

Ms Arroyo called the Senate and the House of Representatives to a special session through Proclamation No. 752 she issued yesterday in Baguio City, where she is spending the holidays with her family at the presidential Mansion House.

The special session will be held on Jan. 5-7 next year, or a week before the two chambers of Congress were originally scheduled to resume sessions after the holiday break.

In her proclamation, President Arroyo said Congress must convene to "urgently consider the passage of the bill providing for optimum performance in revenue collection through the grant of special rewards for exemplary service as well as lateral attrition in revenue-generating agencies of government, and such other revenue-mobilization measures prioritized by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council towards improving the country's fiscal position."

Only the excise tax on alcohol and cigarettes, one of the proposed tax measures, was approved and enacted into law before Congress went on recess on Dec. 17.

Ms Arroyo had proposed eight tax measures which she said were necessary to prevent a full-blown fiscal crisis.

The new taxes are expected to raise P80 billion for the government.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the holding of the special session had been "cleared" with the leaders of Congress.

Malacañang had deferred calling a special session before the Christmas break after tragedy struck the family of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

WARNING TO RENEGADE OFFICER

'You can run, but you can't hide'

By Alcuin Papa

YOU CAN run, but you can't hide.

This was the stern warning issued yesterday by the leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to Lt. Col. Oscarlito Mapalo as it gave the renegade officer until Jan. 1, 2005, to turn himself in to military custody.

AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual also said Mapalo would be facing additional court-martial charges for escaping from military custody on Dec. 21.

Mapalo was restricted to quarters, the military's version of a house arrest, last Nov. 9 after he held a press conference to complain about what he called a biased promotions system in the military.

At that time, Mapalo was restricted to his house on 4 Miller St., Filinvest, Quezon City, with two military police soldiers guarding him.

On Dec. 9, he was transferred to Camp Aguinaldo. But on Dec. 21, Mapalo left his quarters without permission and has not reported back.

Pascual also clarified that even if Mapalo were to turn himself in to military custody before the Jan. 1 deadline, the colonel would still face court-martial charges.

Pascual explained that last September, the Senate committee on defense heard the complaint of Mapalo. But afterwards, it dismissed Mapalo's complaint for lack of basis.

The Senate committee, Pascual stressed, concluded that the military's SOP (standard operating procedure) No. 10, which outlines the promotion system for officers in the AFP, "is still valid and relevant."

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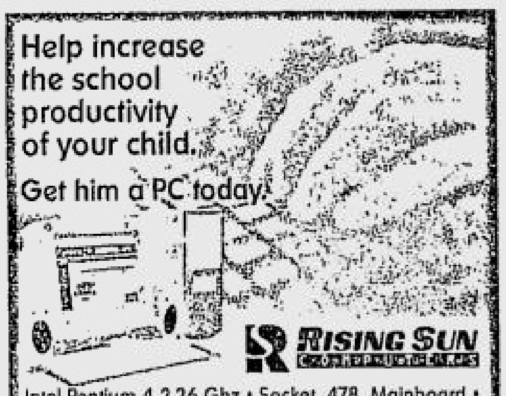
Leyteños honor Our Lady

HILONGOSNONS living in the metropolis are being urged to attend the annual fiesta celebration in honor of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception sponsored by the the Kapunongang Hilongosnon (Leyte) sa Metro Manila (KHMM) on Dec. 30 at the Palanan Sports Center, Filmore Street, Makati City.

KHMM president lawyer Teresita Castillon-Lora said festivities will start with a Mass at 4 p.m. to be followed by the election of club officers, fun activities and musical numbers.

The association will also update members on the progress of its projects, particularly the KHMM Foundation. Dinner will be hosted by the family of Mr. and Mrs. Patricio Jao, this year's *hermana* and *hermano mayores.*

Castillon-Lora asked Hilongosnons to attend and renew acquaintances with relatives, friends and classmates. For more information, interested Hilongosnons may call tel. nos. 826-4697, 0918-501-0110 or 0917-622-0580.



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December 22, 2004

PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 32 , s-2004

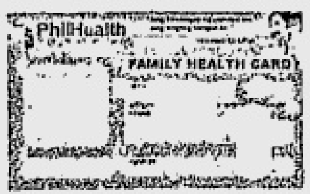
TO : ALL MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (NHIP), ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : NEW DESIGN OF THE PHILHEALTH FAMILY CARD FOR INDIGENTS

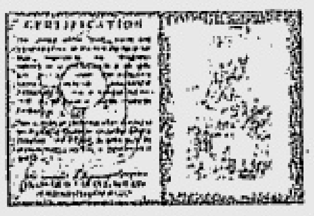
Starting January 3, 2005, please be informed that the Corporation shall be adopting a modification in the design of the PhilHealth Family Health Card intended for the indigent members under the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP).

As reference, the new ID shall appear as follows:

(Front)



(Back)

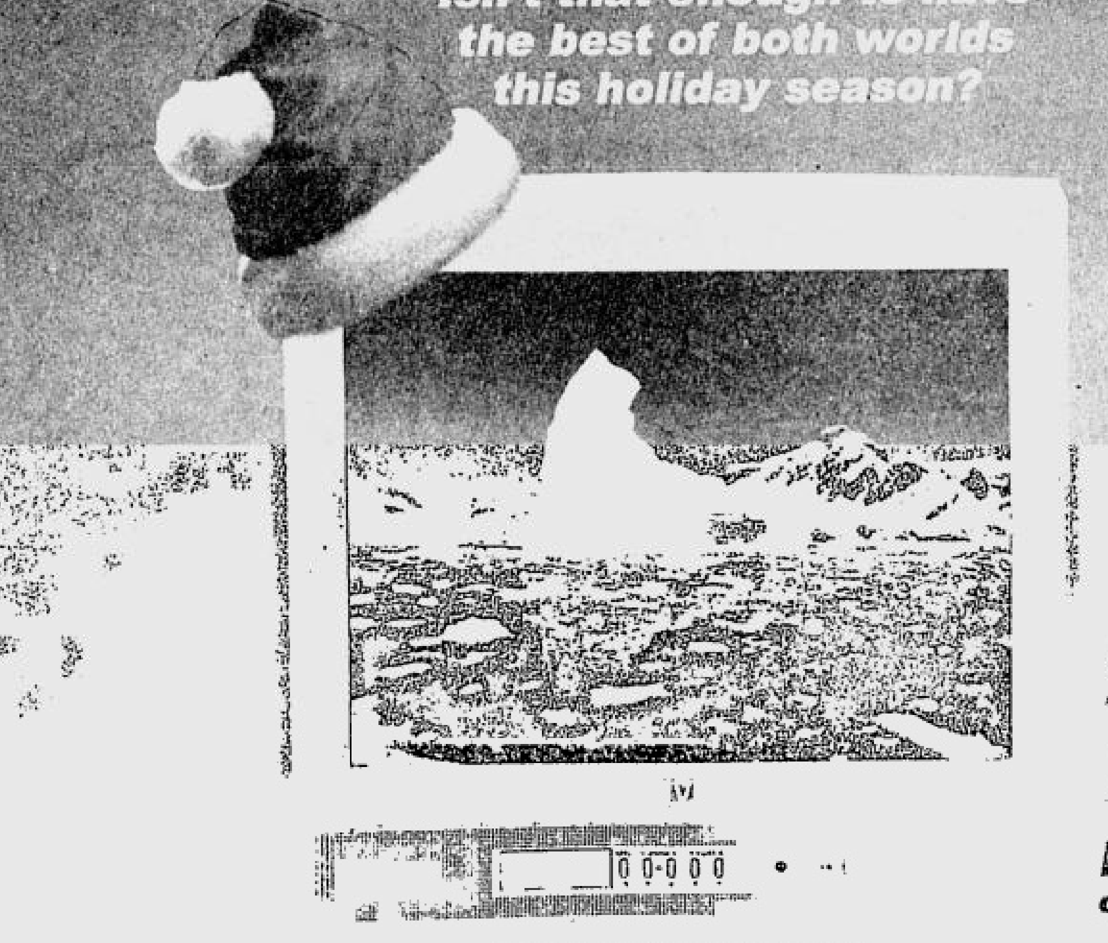


The Greater Medicare Access ID as presented in PhilHealth Circular No. 13, s-2003 and the PhilHealth Family Cards as introduced in PhilHealth Circular No. 04, s-2004, shall still be honored as proof of eligibility in availing the PhilHealth benefits for services rendered within the validity period indicated therein.

All other provisions of PhilHealth Circular No. 18, s-2003 (Documentary Requirements in the Availment of NHIP Benefits) and PhilHealth Circular No. 34, s-2003 (Omnibus Guidelines on Entitlement to NHIP Benefits) shall remain in full force and effect.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, M.D., MSc.
Secretary
President and CEO



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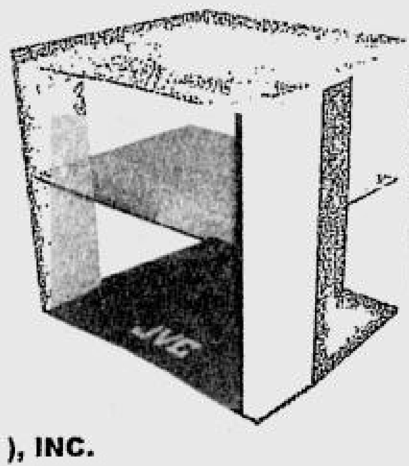

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Editor Luverne B. Gueco

At least 29 dead in huge blast in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Insurgents lured police to a house in west Baghdad with an anonymous tip about a rebel hideout, then set off explosives, killing at least 29 people and wounding 18, police said Wednesday. Seven policemen were among the dead.

The explosion late Tuesday erupted from inside the house in the capital's Ghazaliya district as officers were about to enter, an official at the local police station said. Six neighboring houses collapsed from the blast and several residents are believed to be trapped underneath the rubble.

The police official said the attack was "evidently an ambush" and that "massive amounts of explosives" were used. He said the explosion was apparently triggered by remote control.

The US military said in a statement Wednesday that initial findings from explosive ordnance disposal experts indicated that 700 to 800 kg of explosives were used in the attack. It added that American soldiers and Iraqi troops "worked together through the night to pull potential survivors from the rubble."

Employing car bombs, assassinations, ambushes and raids on police stations, insurgents killed at least 54 people in the Iraqi capital and across the volatile Sunni Triangle on Tuesday, including 31 policemen and a deputy provincial governor.

The string of attacks—including one in which 12 policemen's throats were slit in their station—were the latest by insurgents targeting Iraqis working with the American military or the US-backed government ahead of the Jan. 30 national elections.

Brig. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, assistant commander of the 1st Cavalry Division that controls Baghdad, said attacks by insurgents are expected to escalate further in the run-up to the ballot.

"We anticipate that the enemy will (continue with) attacks, intimidation, assassinations and other messages designed to destroy life in Baghdad," Hammond said, adding that Iraqi security forces will bear the brunt of providing security for the elections and that US troops will back them up only if needed.

Iraqi leaders said the guerrillas—who are mostly Sunni Muslims—are bent on triggering ethnic strife before next month's poll.

"The terrorists intend to destroy Iraq's national unity," a statement issued by the Interim National Assembly said. "Their intentions are to harm this country which faces crucial challenges amid a very difficult period."

Shiite Muslims, who make up around 60 percent of Iraq's people, have been strong supporters of the elections, which they expect to reverse the longtime domination of Iraq's Sunni minority. The insurgency is believed to draw most of its support from Sunnis, who provided much of Saddam Hussein's former Baath Party membership.

Also on Wednesday, a defense ministry spokesperson in Baghdad confirmed that the Iraqi National Guard—a paramilitary internal security force that has borne the brunt of the anti-insurgency effort—will be merged with the regular armed forces. *AP*

Quake may have made Earth wobble, say US scientists

LOS ANGELES—The deadly Asian earthquake may have permanently accelerated the Earth's rotation—shortening days by a fraction of a second—and caused the planet to wobble on its axis, US scientists said on Tuesday.

Richard Gross, a geophysicist with Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, theorized that a shift of mass toward the Earth's center during the quake on Sunday caused the planet to spin 3 microseconds, or one millionth of a second, faster and to tilt about 2.5 cm on its axis.

When one huge tectonic plate beneath the Indian Ocean was forced below the edge of another "it had the effect of making the Earth more compact and spinning faster," Gross said.

Gross said changes predicted by his model probably are too minuscule to be detected by a global positioning satellite network that routinely measures changes in Earth's spin, but said the data may reveal a slight wobble. *Reuters*

Bin Laden shifting to political psy-war, say US analysts

WASHINGTON—US intelligence analysts believe Osama bin Laden has shifted from outright calls for violence to political arguments in recent taped messages in hopes of driving a wedge between the United States and its allies, officials said Tuesday.

The analysts believe Bin Laden is making the tactical shift to try to exploit some allies' concerns with US policy in the Middle East and to attract more moderate Muslims who distrust the United States but have not embraced al-Qaida's violence, the officials said.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the CIA's technical analysis of a two-minute, five-second tape that surfaced Monday concluded with "moderate confidence" that the voice is likely Bin Laden's.

Poor audio quality made it difficult to reach a more certain conclusion, but US officials are operating under the assumption that it is Bin Laden's voice. That tape formally names Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi as al-Qaida's leader in Iraq and tries to persuade Muslims not to vote in the Iraqi elections set for Jan. 30.

Al-Zarqawi has captured worldwide attention for several beheadings of hostages.

The official said US intelligence analysts detected a notable change in messages from Bin Laden and deputy Ayman al-Zawahri in 2004, with fewer threats and specific emphasis on offering political arguments against US policy toward Muslims and the Middle East.

Analysts believe al-Qaida's leadership has "attempted to hone their political message in an effort to persuade the world to rally to their cause. They have gone to great lengths to explain al-Qaida's objections to the West. And this message specifically seeks to isolate the United States from its allies," the official said.

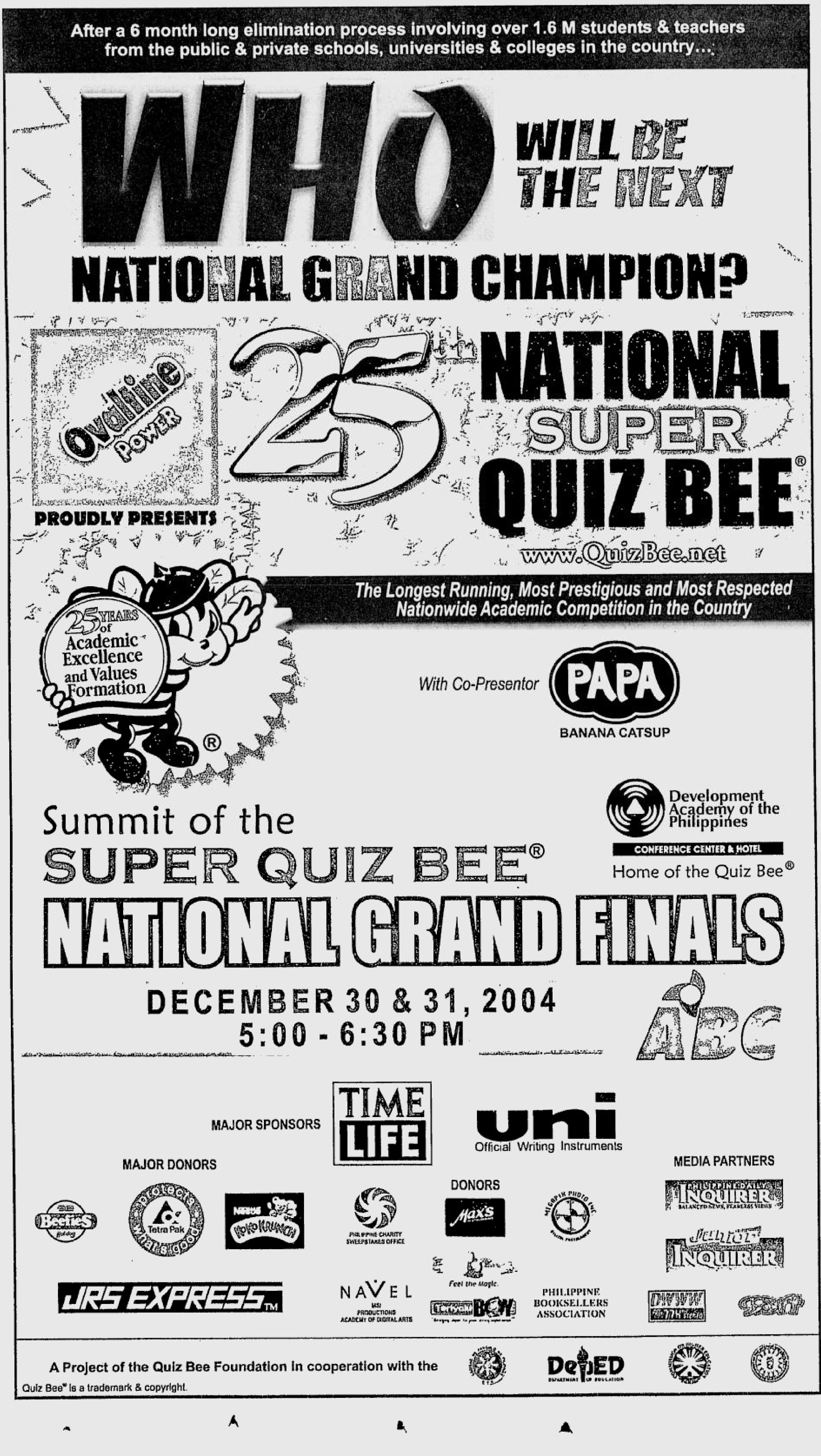
Officials caution, however, that the change in tactic doesn't mean al-Qaida or its allies have foresworn violence. US intelligence continues to gather evidence showing the group's intention to strike Americans, including a recent attack on a US diplomatic post in Saudi Arabia.

Experts say the noticeable change emerged last April in a Bin Laden audio tape that offered a truce between al-Qaida and any Western country that withdrew from fighting in Muslim countries.

Then, a videotape surfaced in October, shortly before the US presidential elections, telling Americans they could spare themselves from future terror attacks if their country stopped threatening the security of Muslims.

Both tapes were in sharp contrast to the gun-wielding bin Laden seen in a 2003 videotape, vowing to strike again.

In Monday's tape, Bin Laden makes an argument against Iraqi participation in next month's elections. *AP*



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Yushchenko's supporters block gov't headquarters

KIEV—Protesters gathered outside Ukraine's government headquarters on Wednesday to prevent Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich from convening the Cabinet after opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko called for keeping up pressure on his rival, who has refused to concede defeat in the weekend presidential election.

Oleksandr Ternavsky, Yanukovich's spokesperson, said the meeting planned for 10 a.m. was canceled, the Interfax news agency reported. He said he didn't know when it would take place.

Calls to the Cabinet's press office were not answered, and spokespersons for other state ministers said they had no information.

About 1,000 demonstrators—their numbers growing by the minute—blocked the entrances to the building Wednesday, refusing to let cars and people enter. Clad in orange ribbons and waving orange campaign flags, the crowd chanted "Resign! Resign!" and banged on drums. Some of the opposition protesters carried the red-and-black flags of Ukraine's Una-Unso, an ultranationalist group.

Some 70 protesters stood in a park across the street chanting "Yushchenko!" Others gathered at Independence Square, the epicenter of the protests.

"Shame on Yanukovich for clinging to power," said Stepan Lukyanov, a Kiev student and member of the pro-Yushchenko Pora youth movement.

It was not clear whether Yanukovich was already in the building. Ternavsky said on Tuesday night that Yushchenko's appeal to his supporters to launch the blockade was "completely illegal."

On Dec. 1, Ukraine's parliament voted to bring down Yanukovich's government in a no-confidence motion. According to the constitution, the government can continue to operate for 60 days until a newly formed Cabinet is in place. The no-confidence vote requires the prime minister to submit his resignation to the president, but Yanukovich refused to do so.

Slava Fatyshek, a 32-year-old Una-Unso member from the eastern city of Kharkiv, said that the blockade would last until a new Cabinet is installed.

Final preliminary results released Tuesday showed that Yushchenko won Ukraine's drawn-out and divisive presidential election with 51.99 percent of the vote to Yanukovich's 44.19 percent—a difference of about 2.3 million votes.

"In principle, we have the result," said Yaroslav Davydovych, the head of the Central Election Commission. "I don't know who can doubt it."

Yanukovich, who returned to work Tuesday as prime minister after taking a leave of absence for the campaign, has refused to concede defeat and said he will challenge the results of Sunday's rerun—the court-ordered, third round of voting—in Ukraine's Supreme Court. He said his campaign team had nearly 5,000 complaints about how the voting was conducted and claimed that 4.8 million people—more than double the margin of Yushchenko's victory—had been unable to cast ballots, among them disabled and elderly voters.

Ukraine's parliament approved restrictions on voting at home in a bid to prevent fraud, but the Constitutional Court threw out the restrictions on the eve of the vote. Many people, however, were unaware of the ruling, Yanukovich's campaign said. *AP*

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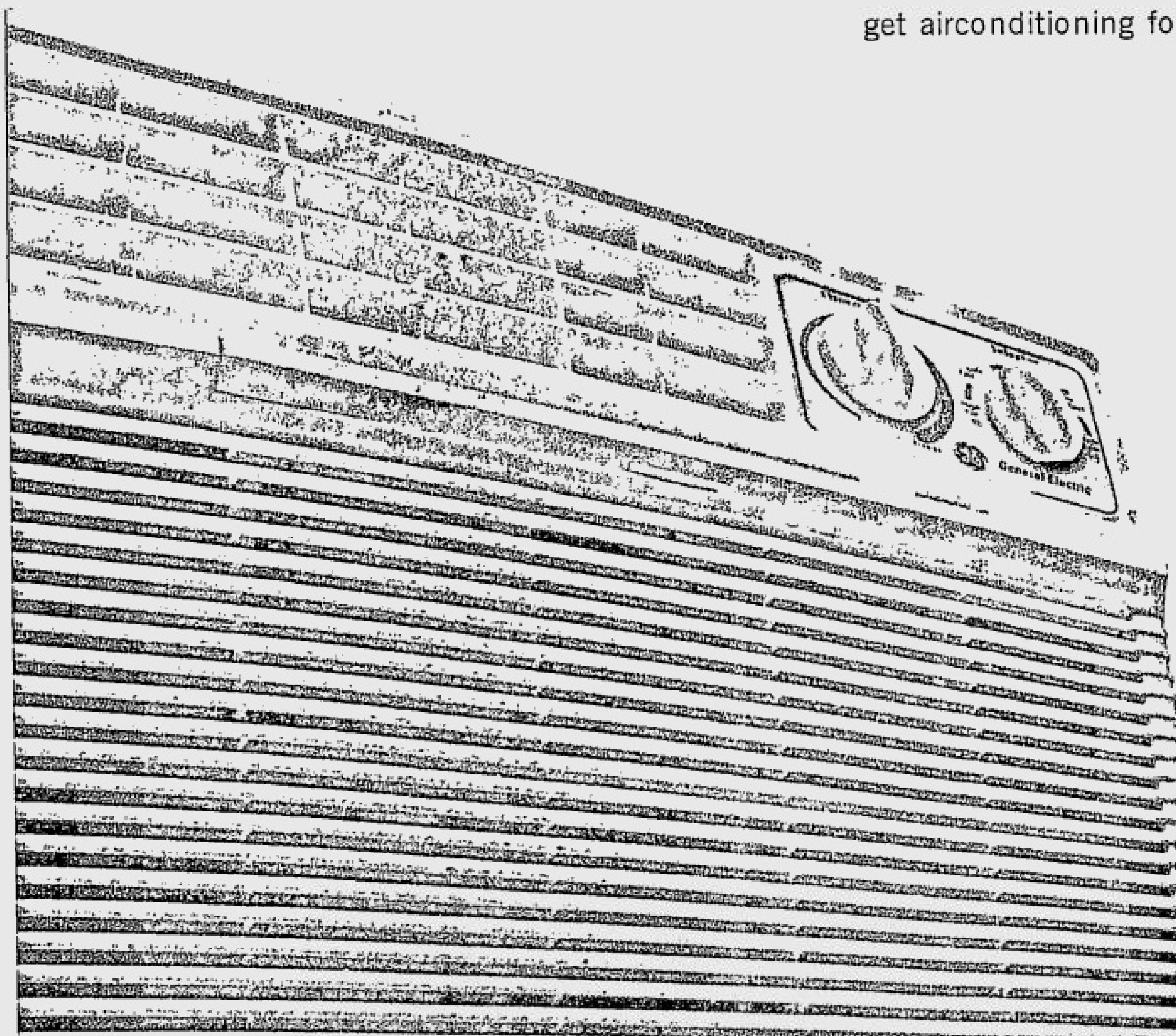

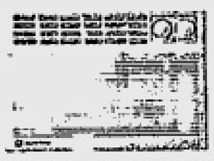

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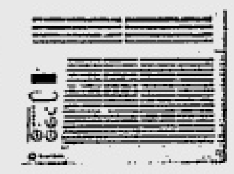

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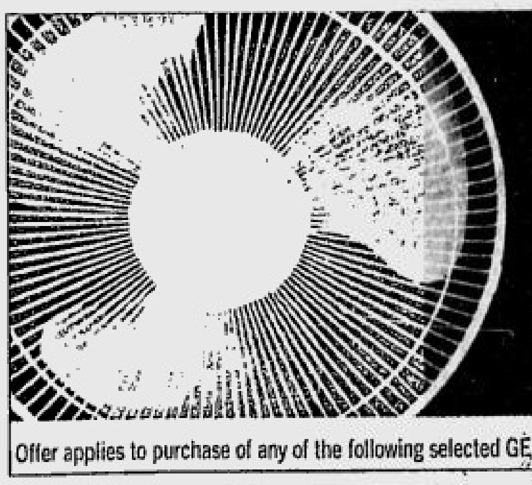

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Hambali, 5 others get life imprisonment

PHNOM PENH—A Cambodian court Wednesday sentenced Indonesian terror suspect Hambali, in absentia, and five other Muslims to life in prison for plotting a terrorist attack in the country, while freeing one Egyptian suspect, the judge said.

"The court sentenced Hambali, (Malaysian) Ibrahim and (Egyptian) Rousha Yasser to life in prison," presiding judge Ya Sakhorn told the court.

The court also sentenced Cambodian Sman Ismael and two Thais Abdul Azi Haji Chiming and Muhammad Yalaludin Mading, to life in prison, he said.

"Esam Mohamid Khird Ali is free," he added.

Only four of the seven were present in court. Hambali has been in US custody since his capture in Thailand in August last year, while Ibrahim and Yasser were also tried in absentia.

HAMBALI

They were convicted of attempted premeditated murder with the goal of terrorism in Phnom Penh between 2002 and 2003, the court said.

"Hambali had planned to attack the British Embassy in Phnom Penh," the judge said, adding that the others convicted were also involved in the plot.

"Hambali is connected with al-Qaida, which has Osama bin Laden as its leader," he added.

Indonesian police allege Hambali is a key leader of the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network which authorities blame for numerous Indonesian bomb attacks, including the October 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people. *AFP, AP*

PLO leader vows to push peace talks with Israel

JERICHO, West Bank—Emergent Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas drew cheers at his first election rally on Tuesday by vowing to follow in Yasser Arafat's footsteps while stressing he would seek a state via peace talks with Israel.

Abbas' appearance before thousands in a sports stadium in the ancient West Bank town of Jericho was notable for his rapport with the crowd after decades as a sober, publicity-shy deputy to the charismatic Arafat.

Cheers and chants repeatedly interrupted his speech and Abbas, 69, smiled broadly and raised his arms each time, looking for the first time like a natural politician thriving in front of a large audience.

Abbas has repeated Arafat's stand that Palestinians will settle for no less than a state in all of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital and the "right of return" of refugees to what is now Israel.

Israel rules out such an outcome. But after boycotting Arafat as an alleged mastermind of bloodshed, Israel and chief mediator the United States have warmed to Abbas as someone they could deal with because he has condemned violence as a mistake.

Arafat died at the age of 75 of an undisclosed illness in a hospital near Paris on Nov. 11.

"Our (political) positions are the positions of Arafat," said Abbas. "(But) we want an authority based on institutions and the rule of law. We have chosen negotiations and peace as the path to achieve our rights."

Abbas has raised hopes for Middle East peace by quickly becoming the overwhelming favorite to succeed Arafat in a Jan. 9 presidential election, riding a significant swing in popular sentiment in favor of negotiations.

"Although views may differ (among Palestinian factions on how to reach statehood), we are all sons of the homeland. I say: no to infighting, yes to national unity," said Abbas.

Security was very tight around Abbas because of fears of threats from powerful militants who reject any ceasefire and have insinuated he might "capitulate" in talks with Israel.

But following the speech, spectators were allowed to flow onto the stadium stage to shake hands with the candidate. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Taiwan antisecession law

BEIJING—China's top legislators agreed on Wednesday to send parliament a draft antisecession law for approval, saying it was the Communist Party's "historic task" to reunite the mainland with Taiwan, state media reported. The law, which China says is aimed at peaceful reunification with the self-governing island it claims as its own, is to be debated at a full session of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress which opens for its next session on March 5. Wednesday's decision was announced by Wu Bangguo, chair of the NPC's Standing Committee, after a five-day meeting. Taiwan and the mainland have been divided since China's Nationalists or Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island as the Communists swept to power in 1949. Beijing has vowed to bring it back into the fold, by force if necessary. *Reuters*

Writer Susan Sontag dies; 71

NEW YORK—American feminist author Susan Sontag died Tuesday at New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering medical center at the age of 71, following a long struggle against cancer, the hospital announced. "Miss Sontag passed away at Memorial Sloan-Kettering today, Dec. 28, at 7:10 a.m.," said hospital spokesperson Joanne Nicholas. Sontag first had breast cancer at the age of 43 and had since suffered ill health. In March of last year, Sontag was found to have leukemia and later had a partial bone marrow transplant. The author of 17 books, she was the recipient in 2000 of one of the United States' most prestigious literary prizes, the National Book Award, for her novel "In America." She was known for her work as a critic of art, culture and society since the 1960s. She was also involved in film and theater. Sontag was a prominent human rights activist. *AFP*

Romania has new gov't

BUCHAREST—Romania's parliament voted in a centrist government on Tuesday packed with young, Western-educated academics vowing to speed up reforms needed to bring the Balkan country into the European Union. Forged from four centrist parties, Romania's youngest post-communist cabinet faces two years of hard work to join the wealthy bloc along with Bulgaria in 2007 as planned. A joint session of both houses of parliament voted 265 for and 200 against Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu's government, hailed by many Romanians as a new beginning 15 years after the fall of Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Voters tired with poverty and corruption punished the outgoing ex-communist PSD for dragging its feet in pro-Western reforms. The young centrists must tackle a mountain of work in revamping rusty public administration and justice. "Our main mission is EU integration," said Tariceanu, a successful businessman before turning to politics. *Reuters*

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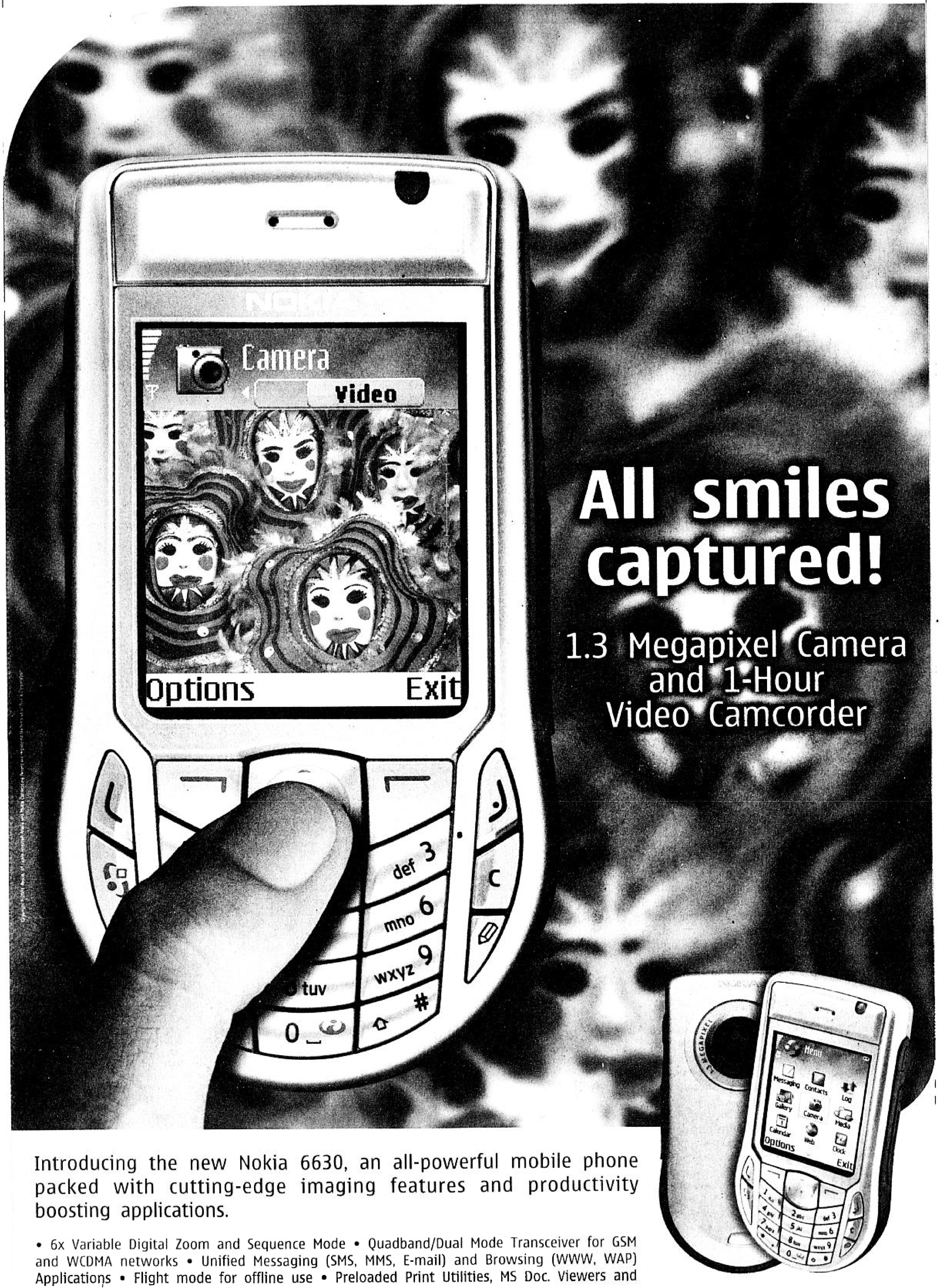

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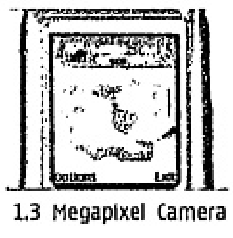
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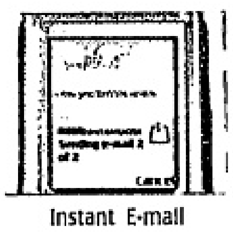
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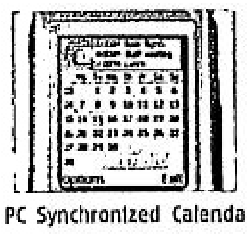
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The hero in everyone

EDITORIAL

COMMEMORATING Rizal's martyrdom always leads to the question: What has happened to Filipino heroism? If every generation since Rizal's has contributed a martyr to our civic culture—Jose Abad Santos and Benigno Aquino Jr. foremost among them—where are our heroes now? Overshadowing everything is a sinking sense of self-worth, the kind of self-doubt that prompted Aquino to make the positive injunction, "The Filipino is worth dying for."

If the country has been fortunate to have heroes die for it, it's equally necessary to appreciate the fact that so many heroes have—and do—live for it. The four recent typhoons proved the heroic capacity of contemporary Filipinos beyond a shadow of doubt. By this we mean more than the spectacular cases of heroism, such as Fr. Charlito Colendres', which the whole country admired. We mean the many acts of heroism that remain undocumented and unheralded. There were professional relief workers who went far beyond the call of duty during those grim days. The way many members of corporations volunteered to go to the provinces to do their part was also very inspiring. In Metro Manila, volunteers of the Philippine National Red Cross worked double, even triple, shifts to ensure that relief goods were properly packed and dispatched.

In countless cases, people faced physical danger and experienced hardship out of a senseless sense of concern for their countrymen. Most of all, these people did so while avoiding, or in quite a few cases, refusing any publicity. People stuck to their jobs, they did more than was expected, they did everything required and much more, while asking nothing in return.

Contrast this to the officials who delayed the airlifting of relief goods, because they insisted that the AFP helicopters bring them on "inspections," thus bumping off bags of relief items so they and their staff could see and be seen by the disaster-struck, and the heroism of those who ignored publicity and did their duty is all the more remarkable. There were the teenagers, ordinary office workers, people from humble walks of life who, in the first day of a donate-by-text appeal, flooded the Philippine National Red Cross with over P700,000 in donations. These are people for whom P50, P20 or even P10 is a big deal—and still gave generously.

True heroism is sacrificing for your fellow man without expecting or wanting anything in return. True heroism is rising over narrow-self interest to come together with others to pool talent, time and resources to assist those in need. No one can doubt the capacity for heroism of the Filipino. But we can still wonder why we continue to be plagued with self-doubt as a people.

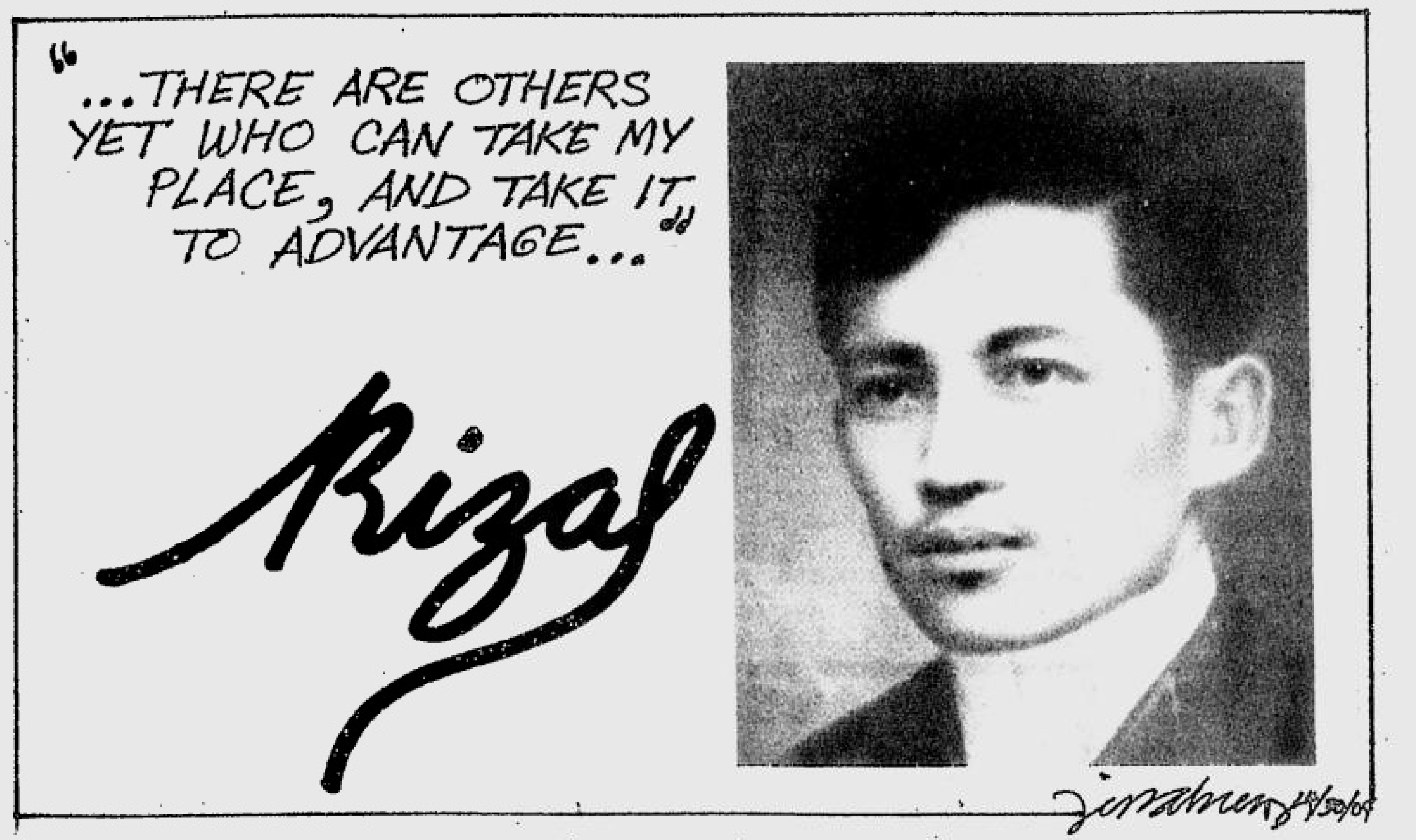
What is lacking, perhaps, is a national lifestyle that goes beyond extraordinary acts of heroism, and demonstrates a slow, steady, consistent dedication to living a virtuous life. This was, indeed, the obsession of Rizal's life. If he was a man often conscious of his destiny, he was also a man motivated by a desire to instill an ethical sense in his countrymen.

Rizal was profoundly admired, of course, by two other great men who demonstrated in their own way, a deep understanding of both the greatness and limitations of the Filipino people: Andres Bonifacio and Apolinario Mabini. Both took to heart Rizal's injunction that Filipino society be conducted according to the highest, and strictest, principles of compassion and justice.

Rizal wrote about, and was a living example, of the need for sobriety, preparation and hard work. He was concerned with the intellectual development of his countrymen. Bonifacio expressed the fundamental need for independence and equality, the liberation of both the self and the national whole. Mabini saw the dangers inherent in our society and how it was molded and affected by our leaders, and wrote of the need to have leaders of virtue to bring out the virtues in our people.

All of them never doubted the capacity of the Filipino to be heroic. All recognized that heroism was not enough. Or put another way, that heroism flourishes where good, dedicated people live simple, responsible lives.

Since we have heroes aplenty, what our country obviously needs is follow-through. Only then can heroism really bear the fruits noble deeds deserve.


"...THERE ARE OTHERS YET WHO CAN TAKE MY PLACE, AND TAKE IT TO ADVANTAGE..."
Rizal
Jonathan 12/30/04

Murder with a wink

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WILL Mayor Tomas Osmeña's "Hunter Team" in Cebu City copy-cat the "death squads" of Davao as well as that of Haiti, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Indonesia, Spain and Stalin's Russia, to cite a few?

His "Hunters" hasn't been officially launched, but Osmeña has already announced cash-on-the-scalp bounties: P20,000 for cops who kill or "permanently disable" any criminal.

Wait. "Santa Claus" has more. Another P10,000 will go to those who bag a robber, while on leave. That's "beyond the call of duty."

Felon or mere suspect? The new "rules of engagement" scrub these basic differences. They clone what the UN Commission on Human Rights noted in Davao: Killings are linked to a "bounty system." Wealthy persons put out a contract for their enemies to death squads. "Going rate was P35,000 for each kill..." (The gunman) got P15,000, the balance was divvied up by those in cahoots with vigilantes..

"We'll respect human rights," Osmeña assures worried citizens, from Ricardo Cardinal Vidal to the officers of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. After pulling the trigger? "We'll go to the law's limit and whack them." Good governance grows out of the barrel of a gun.

As in Davao, many in Cebu are fed up with unsolved crimes, inept police, snail-paced administration of justice. "It's a cheap price to pay for peace and order," Davao businessmen told Reuters. Some Cebuanos think so, too.

Cain didn't need balance sheets or legal jargon like "extra judicial execution." Murder is murder. He ducked by asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Today, death squads "shield sponsors from liability," notes the UN Working Group on Desaparecedos. "The illusion of spontaneous criminal violence provides plausible deniability" for murder with a wink.

Officially, Osmeña's "Hunter Team" hasn't saddled up. That offers "deniability"—meaningless to 10 "criminals" gunned down by bonnet-masked killers. All were "eliminated with extreme prejudice" within a week after the mayor posted his bounties. One child was injured.

They had "criminal records," the police explained. "It's not good to speculate that they were rubbed out by police vigilantes," Waterfront police station deputy chief Calixto Sanchez cautions. His men launched a pro-forma probe that will fizzle out sooner than later. And they know you know.

But the cops admit the killings didn't occur on "hot pursuit." Two were asleep in their barangay shanties when blasted to smithereens. Another was sitting in a taxi dispatcher's slot. A fourth was cuddling a 2-year-old niece. Yet another was in his mother's eatery.

"Even animals have the right to live," a sister of one victim wailed.

That's precisely the point Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej stressed in his blunt Dec. 4 birthday address. The King assailed over 1,200 executions, reportedly done by death squads under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's campaign against drug dealers.

That the King should comment is remarkable. "Normally if the Palace does not take a case seriously, our monarch will not comment. He comes out only in very critical events," says a Thai human rights worker.

Flawed from the beginning, the death squad policy "was a child of corruption and public opinion, concerned about growing crime," Asia Times' David Fullbrook writes. It was "a way of forcing the corruption-riddled police to work."

That murder-with-a-wink policy failed. "Many people were killed and incarcerated unjustly. The due process of law was ignored," said Sen. Kraisak Choonhavan, a senior government adviser during the 1980s and 1990s.

Bangkok stopped body counts last March. The soaring death toll prompted a torrent of criticism that murder-with-a-wink spawned a culture of impunity for criminals with a tin badge. There was "murmuring by diplomats, and charges that state-sanctioned death squads were at work."

Did Cebu's mayor look beyond Davao and Bangkok to, say, Myanmar? In Yangon, the junta's squads repeatedly terrorize followers of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. How about Chile? Under the dictator Augusto Pinochet, death squads killed, in a Washington car bombing, former Ambassador Orlando Letelier. The 1991 Rettig report documented 2,920 assassinations. The 2004 National Commission on Political Prisons report contains declarations of 35,868 victims.

Death squads in Colombia, Honduras, Haiti and Brazil targeted street children and favela squatters. (In Davao, the UN reveals that about 16 percent of those "salvaged" were between 13 and 17 years old.) As expected, most of these crimes remain resolved. Stalin's death squads ultimately ended up executing NKVD chief Lavrenti Beria. And before Span threw off the Franco dictatorship, squads—including policemen funded with tax money—attacked suspected members of Basque organizations.

Here, UP professor Walden Bello and Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales believe they're on the Communist Party of the Philippines' hit list. There's basis for their concern. Reds executed former members who quit like Romulo Kintanar. Between 1986 and 1990, death squads in their "Kampanyang Ahos" murdered hundreds of innocent comrades in infiltration paranoia.

"Those who arrogate to themselves the power to take life, play God," Sun Star Daily noted last July. If Osmeña repeals the Fifth Commandment, "he should respell the word God with a small 't'—as in Tomas."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Silence

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

(Conclusion)

THE SECOND aspect, or guise, of silence is giving.

In giving, the giver does not draw attention to herself. She disappears in the act of giving. Obviously this does not refer to politicians who have not been known to give without benefit of a camera rolling or clicking away. For the true giver, however, whether she gives something wrought out of her hand, or whether she gives something of herself, she disappears, and the only thing that are left are the gift and the given.

It is a form of silence. Asking is a loud act that draws attention to oneself. This is what I want, this is what I need. You cannot get more clamorous and clangorous than that. Giving is a quiet act. It is an act that makes the giver anonymous, it is an act that renders the giver invisible. It is an act that wraps the giver in silence.

That, too, I find myself appreciating in the context of today's world, especially in light of globalization. The whole concept of globalization is really a selfish one in more ways than that it has been reduced nearly solely to the globalization of commodities and the turning of human beings into automatons who produce. It is so in that it is premised in the attitude of asking rather than giving. The one question those who enter it, or are sucked into its whirlpool, ask is not, "What can I give to the other peoples of the world?" It is, "What can I get from the other peoples of the world?" It is not, "What can I contribute to humanity?" It is, "What can I derive from humanity?"

Lastly—and this one was repeatedly suggested though it was never clearly highlighted—silence is the ability or willingness to raise questions rather than propose answers.

I have attended many media conferences, and I have always been assailed by the rush of people to come up with "concrete proposals" at the end of the day. I was in Barcelona some months ago for just such a conference, i.e., building communication bridges between Europe and Asia. And I remember saying exasperatedly to the young man who was moderating our group and was eager to regale the plenary session with a long list of what-to-do's that maybe we would do better to just see first what divided Europe and Asia communication-wise. That was to say, maybe we would do better just raising questions than supplying answers, whether at working committee or plenary level.

I have found—and this I can say with much conviction after a half century of life—that one insightful question is always worth a thousand answers. The answers tend to be blithe, or facile, or superficial anyway and are forgotten as soon as the conference is over. It is the insightful question that lives on and becomes the rallying point or battleground in forums.

The ability to ask questions partakes of silence, too. Giving answers is a loud act. It thunders forth to everyone whether they are willing to listen or not: "This is how I see things, this is how I want things done." Asking questions, like giving, is an act steeped in silence. It is self-effacing. It allows the one who is asking questions to fade in the process, leaving only his question hanging over everyone like a cloud, sometimes dark and ominous, sometimes bright and full of promise.

But more than this, the ability to ask questions is not just an ability to ask questions about the world, it is an ability to ask questions about oneself. It is the ability to ransack one's soul or submit it to the implacable terrors of a self-inquisition. I think it was our Muslim sister from America who pointed out that objectivity is nothing more than subjectivity expanded tremendously by travel and experience. You remain subjective at the end of the day, but you represent a broader subjectivity than the one you started out with.

That is premised however on openness, which is the ability to ask questions. When you start asking questions, you do not just learn to suspend judgment about the world, you cut the rope and let yourself fall. Maybe you'll crash to the ground, all your beliefs and theories about the world and your self-valuation exploding into a hundred pieces. Or maybe you'll soar to the heavens.

But this is the part where I will diverge from many of you. For me, this dimension of silence is allied not with the comfort of certainty, which religion offers, but with the flailing of doubt. Doubt is the one precious gift a journalist has, and doubt is the one faculty that I expect to be, or look forward to being, honed by silence.

You ask what we can do to make the global media better. I do not know. I can only speak for myself, which is perhaps not just the best place to start but the only place to. I can only say that having learned a new lesson in humility, or in silence, I am more resolutely willing to incorporate in my work a spirit of asking questions rather than proffering answers, an attitude of giving rather than demanding, a willingness to listen amid the din of doom and deadline.

The beginning of communication is not sound, it is silence. The one thing the three aspects of silence above have in common is the awareness or discovery of the other person. Listening is being aware of, or discovering, the other person. Giving is being aware of, or discovering, the other person. Asking questions is being aware of, or discovering, the other person.

In the end, silence is the awareness of, or discovery, of the other person. Which is the beginning of communication. Without the other person, there is no dialogue, there is only monologue. Without the other person, there is no communication, there is only self-indulgence. Without the other person, there is no love, there is only, well, that is what you do with yourself in the john.

But I have taxed your capacity to listen long enough. I will now practice what I preach and lapse into a long and deep silence.

Helpless in the face of Nature's wrath

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE UNPARALLELED destruction wrought by the magnitude 9 earthquake that shook up the floor of the Indian Ocean and caused huge tsunamis that traveled faster than a jumbo jet reminds us humans of our own helplessness in the face of Nature's wrath. As many as 70,000 people may have been killed, including the grandson of the king of Thailand who was jet-skiing when the huge waves swallowed him. On the other hand, the incredibly huge swath of damage to property and infrastructure in 10 countries cannot as yet be assessed and quantified. The recent tragedy is a most humbling experience for the human race, but the international mobilization of relief, predicted to be the biggest in history, is also a lesson in the oneness of humanity.

* * *

Only a few days ago, the entire southeastern coast of Thailand basked in the glow of a $10-billion tourism industry, of which 40 percent was earned in the area around Phuket, its answer to Indonesia's Bali. Now Phuket is in ruins.

Last Dec. 15, at the awards ceremony for the outstanding overseas Filipinos held in Malacañang, I teased the emcee, ABS-CBN's business news anchor Ces Oreña-Drilon, about her beautiful deep tan. She said she had just come from the resort island of Maldives, whose white sand beaches are "just gorgeous." Maldives was almost swallowed up by tsunamis.

Indonesia's northern Sumatra, the scene of violent separatist wars over the past decade, was among the hardest hit, with an estimated 30,000 people killed.

Tiny Sri Lanka was also terribly hit, and the death toll is predicted to reach 22,000.

* * *

In the wake of the killer earthquake and tsunamis that hit South Asia and even parts of Africa, President Macapagal-Arroyo spoke about upgrading the country's disaster-warning capability. This is well and good, but acquisition of such equipment will cost plenty, and the government may not be able to afford it at this time. The same is true of many nations that are similarly situated financially. Perhaps the best thing the RP can do is tie up with more affluent nations and enter into a regional agreement to share expertise and equipment.

* * *

Since disaster seems endemic to our region and RP could be hit by earthquakes and tsunamis any time, perhaps it's timely for the nations in this region to convene a summit conference on disasters. The nations of South and Southeast Asia should assess the recent calamities and determine what they could do jointly to mitigate their terrible consequences. The less affluent nations such as ours could contribute manpower in a disaster-monitoring system for the region. Perhaps GMA could offer to host such a summit here.

* * *

Our country has had its share of disasters in the past two months, but unfortunately, we saw a lot of finger-pointing and blame-passing. For instance, after the recent fire that gutted the home of Speaker Jose de Venecia and killed his 16-year-old daughter KC, I cited his lament that if only the Makati firemen had even one or two asbestos suits, his daughter could have been saved. I wrote that there was no excuse for the city fire department's failure to acquire such asbestos suits, considering that it is the richest city in the country, with a budget of P8 billion to P9 billion annually.

* * *

An official from the Makati Fire Department wrote to say that providing such equipment is not its job but that of the Bureau of Fire Protection. What he was saying was that the BFD failed to do so. Okay, so the BFP failed, but shouldn't Makati City have gotten those asbestos suits for its firefighting unit, given its huge budget and the fact that a set of one asbestos suit with head flashlight and oxygen tank costs only P180,000? The media learned about the cost when the Subic Fire Department gave a demonstration of its preparedness at Hotel Dusit Nikko, at the behest of Speaker Jose de Venecia, the day after his daughter's funeral. The Subic people also demonstrated how a battery-operated cutter could cut even thick window grills in seconds. Imagine, only P180,000 for one asbestos suit with oxygen tank and what it can do to save lives!

JDV has said that with the cooperation of President Arroyo and Senate President Franklin Drilon, he would make sure the sum of P30 million will be included in next year's budget for the purchase of asbestos suits for the use of urban centers at least. Let this be KC de Venecia's legacy to the nation.

* * *

As the old year closes amid such terrible natural tragedies, the thoughts of many turn to God and people have become very prayerful. After the Feast of the Holy Family last Dec. 26, a friend passed on to me this prayer of consecration of families composed by St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, and I know many families would like to make this consecration on New Year's Eve. Here it is:

"O Jesus, our most lovable Redeemer, you came to light up the world with your example and doctrine, and chose to spend the greater part of your life subject to Mary and Joseph in the humble house at Nazareth, sanctifying the family that all Christian homes were to imitate. Graciously accept the consecration of the families of your children that we now make to you. Take them under your protection and care, and fashion them after the divine model of your Holy Family.

"Mary, most holy Mother of Jesus and our Mother, through your powerful intercession, make this consecration pleasing to God.

"O Joseph, holy Patriarch, guardian of Jesus and Mary, help our families in all their spiritual and material needs, so that they may bless our divine Redeemer, Jesus, for ever in heaven."

'Backpack of a Jesus-seeker'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

IF you're one of those trying to make sense of the seemingly senseless Christmas to-do, groaning under the weight of gifts that had to be wrapped, trees that had to be lighted; if you're suffering from *christmasa nervosa*, misplaced anxieties, worries and edginess (because it's Christmas), pause a while, inhale and gather your wits. Maybe Christmas has indeed passed you by. Good for you or good on you. You brought this condition upon yourself.

Missed out on the Christ in Christmas?

Noted Jesuit theologian Fr. Carlos Abesamis has come out with a sequel to his "travel guide" of a book, "A Third Look at Jesus," about which we wrote in this space some years ago. This new one, titled "Backpack of a Jesus-seeker," has the format of conversations going on among several characters. One character is Carl (not Karl Marx but the author), the seeker who has been in search of the original Jesus and found him but still continues to search; and the Backpack.

"Backpack" answers questions Christian believers ask about the basics of their faith: the teachings and ministry of Jesus as well as his death and resurrection, the Kingdom of God, heaven, etc. Through the conversations, Abesamis deconstructs and gives fresh interpretation to the hard-bound catechism gathering dust on the shelf.

Now that's not easy to do. So it couldn't be helped if the conversations sometimes sound contrived, with the theological weight weighing down on the backpack. Some stuff are simply weighty in themselves, and why not. (I just wish the book design were lighter, minus the all CAPS, bold face, italics, underscoring and illustrations trying to outdo one another. The backpack doohickey is cute though.)

I must say Abesamis makes theology sort of fun and the Christian faith worth living out. His effort to bring things down at ground level is admirable. That's my view. I have no intention to write a review. I just wish to share what the book is about.

Believer or non-, there is always something to learn from the core of any religious faith. Let's eavesdrop on a conversation on "life blessings or total well-being," food and, of course, eating:

Backpack: For ordinary folks, the Kingdom of God could be a new world filled with life-blessings.

Seeker: ...such as decent homes, security, education, jobs, nutritious meals, the sea-breezes, spiritual well-being, the energy they get from the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, friendships—these are all life-blessings.

Carl: ... any and every blessing that gives life.

Seeker: Life-blessings include, but are not limited to, spiritual grace and divine life...

Carl: In short, we are here talking about total well-being... Have you been to a farmer's vegetable farm bursting with a spectacular variety of vegetables and fruits? Isaiah's version of the Kingdom of God can be compared to that. It is a rich harvest of vibrant details about the Kingdom of God.

Seeker: But that is Isaiah, five centuries before Jesus. Could Jesus have had another and different idea?

Backpack: Jesus had the same idea. In fact, Isaiah provided the source for Jesus' understanding. Watch how the ideas, images, and words of Isaiah are echoed in Jesus' words...(Matthew 11 and Luke 7 and 4)

Backpack: Talking about life-blessings, we will do well to discuss the most striking life-blessing linked with the Kingdom of God. What would be a good guess? Hint: a lot of people carry it around often in their backpack, especially workers and schoolchildren. It is available in abundance during barrio fiestas.

Seeker: A good guess is...hmmm...food!

Backpack: Yes! Food! This was already included on the report on the beatitudes (Blessed are you who hunger, you shall be satisfied).

Carl: But it is worth expanding on it, first, because, from my own experience, it overturns one of our misconceptions, that is, that so-called "material" things, like food, cannot be part of spiritual salvation...

Seeker: There goes somebody being stood up on his head again!

Backpack: ...second, because food is a life-and-death issue in a world where millions of children and adults are malnourished and hungry...

Carl: But let us discuss these contemporary implications at some other time. Today, let us focus on the biblical data, the indispensable foundation in our search.

Backback: Well, first, it is truly intriguing that food would be part of Jesus' Kingdom scenario. "Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:29; Matthew 8:11).

Seeker: Given our average mind-set, it is truly intriguing.

Carl: And furthermore, the Scripture not only incorporates food into the Kingdom scenario, it also does it so spontaneously, so casually—as if "to eat bread" is a typical, expected and normal activity in the future Kingdom of God! "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke 14:15)

Backpack: And furthermore, it is natural and so taken for granted that the blessing most frequently associated with the Kingdom of God is food. Samples: "Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God"...

Carl: And did you know that in the Lord's prayer, the bread ("Give us this day our daily bread") originally referred to the food of the coming Kingdom of God at the end of time?

Seeker: To wrap it up, we Asians and Filipinos can say: The Kingdom of God is Rice!

Carl: Up here! And rice, corn, *chapati*, bread, yam, cassava, *kamote*, in short, food, is a significant life-blessing in the barrio fiesta of the Kingdom of God.

Paskong Makahulugan at Bagong Taong Makasaysayan.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Protomartyr

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

MAN of intelligence, man of the full flowering of the virtues; man of example and hope, and foremost in the ranks of the martyrs who have periodically reinvigorated our desire for freedom: Jose Rizal. He who gave up his life, a century ago, today so that a nation would be transfused with the vigor of self-respect by the shedding of his blood. A century after his death, let our pulses quicken with the thought that the self-respect he transfused into a whole people is still present in our veins. Although at times this self-respect has been so feeble as to convince observers that we are a people nearly comatose when it comes to acting in our own self-interest.

What we should feel today is what so many of us felt 21 years ago, on Aug. 21, 1993, to be precise. On that day the generation of the grandchildren of Rizal's contemporaries gathered in Makati to celebrate 10 years since the martyrdom of another man who redeemed an entire generation: Ninoy Aquino. Also slain by a stupid regime which, in its hubris, could not see that what he would have really wanted was a reasonable accommodation with despotism; preferring to murder a man who had desired a peaceful transition to freedom, if only to prevent fratricide in the form of a revolution. And whose assassination convinced the majority, who had heretofore acquiesced to tyranny, to finally reject the tyrant and all his works. Much in the same way that Rizal's execution irredeemably demonized Spain in the eyes of the majority of Filipinos.

During that anniversary, the old guard of the anti-Marcos opposition and more recent converts to the cause of freedom marched in memory of a solidarity by then lost, but nonetheless missed. They stood up to be counted, perhaps for the last time, to bear witness to the generation of their children, by then used to freedom, who were too young 10 years before to appreciate the anger and outrage that moved their parents.

If you can still remember that day, you know exactly how your forebears felt in the Rizal Days of old.

Even as the veterans of the days of the parliament of the streets, of Laban and of Edsa are bitterly divided today over the ifs, ands, or buts that served to make sour the fruits of vanquishing (for too brief a time, really) the Marcoses, so too were—are!—the heirs of Rizal's gift of nationhood divided as to the significance of Rizal's death. This division will cast its gloomy shadow over today's anniversary and the commemorative ceremonies.

But as far as this argument is concerned, let Teodoro M. Locsin's conclusions suffice. Writing in his biography, "Rizal," Locsin observes:

"...A man is presumed to have intended all the consequences of his act. Rizal was a revolutionary, for he incited the people to a revolution. That he did not mean to do so is beside the point.

"The voice of moderation, pleading for due process of law under an absolute despotism, arguing the possibility of persuading the tiger to change its stripes and cease to be a tiger, does not know the tiger. Asking the tiger and the lamb to lie down together in gentleness—as though it were possible—disarms the lamb and feeds the tiger... Ultimately, the tiger, grown dull and stupid from undisputed rule, fails to distinguish between friend and food and devours not only lamb but pharisee.

"In the story of his life as a revolutionary by consequence rather than by intention, the distaste for violence however necessary and the distrust of the masses native to him provide a kind of counterpoint to the main and classic theme of oppression and revolt. Rizal's death, a monument to serene courage and intellectual confusion, of a peace that passes all understanding—his death which precipitated the revolution was one more instance of the peculiar logic and morality of the historical processes, the delicate perversity and smiling savagery of the gods."

A perversity and logic, one can always say have manifested themselves constantly in our experience as a growing nation: Rizal, who had proclaimed the bourgeoisie a rose blooming on a dunghill (the dunghill being the masses), was adopted as avatar of the revolution by the masses themselves and his fellow ilustrados. Jose Abad Santos, who died for his autonomous government but who also willingly died out of loyalty to the Great North American Nation, was proclaimed a martyr to patriotism. Benigno Aquino Jr., who had come home to reason and appeal to the better instincts of the man who had jailed him for so long, was assassinated and made supreme icon of the religious revival now known as Edsa.

This is not to say that being a reluctant and accidental martyr, Rizal should be deprived of his status as our secular St. Stephen. Indeed, one could say that precisely because of his dignity throughout the trial meant to make him a scapegoat for the Revolution, he earned his distinction as first among patriots.

Let Rizal's contemporary, Apolinario Mabini, one of the geniuses of the Revolution, have the final say. Writing in his "La Revolucion Filipina," Mabini penned this estimation of Rizal:

"[Rizal] was found guilty of having been [the revolution's] chief instigator because had it not been for the articles he had published in La Solidaridad and for his novels, the people would never have taken to politics. This judgment was totally incorrect because political activities in the Philippines antedated Rizal, because Rizal was only a personality created by the needs of these activities: if Rizal had not existed, somebody else would have played his role. The movement was by nature slow and gentle, it had become violent because obstructed. Rizal had not started the resistance, yet he was condemned to death: were he not innocent, he would not be a martyr."

Heroes

YOUNG BLOOD

Gerald C. Sia

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THEY say there are no more heroes left in this country. They say people have gotten accustomed to seeing the poor get poorer, the rich get richer and politicians taking more than serving. When people are told that the economy is faring badly, they just shrug and say, "That's just how life is these days."

Well, I'm not one of them. There is not an inch of my being that doesn't want to help and serve those who need help, and make a big contribution in this screwed-up world, something that will last long after I'm gone.

Bold thought, I know. And I know you've probably heard it before. Every young graduate worth his salt leaves college steeped in idealism and with dreams of making it big. I know a lot of people who aspire to be great Filipinos, heroes to the country that so desperately needs one. But what happens to their dreams a few years after that? How come we're still in such a sorry state, and the youth have more TV soap-opera heroes than real-life ones?

Things happen to such hero wannabes. Maybe some of them weren't really serious in the first place. A lot of people are like this. They just flit from one ambition to the next. But as they say, if you aim at two targets, you end up missing both.

There are some who really were serious, but after a few years of trying, found out that the doing wasn't as easy as the dreaming. A lot of really noble, worthwhile dreams die in this manner. The harsh realities of life can make dreams wither. We dream a lot when we're small, but how many of those dreams do we get to live out?

Others, after seeing how things really work and struggling so hard (with barely anything to show for it), conclude that they might as well just play by others' rules. And these boil down to "Every man for himself." Life is so hard that you can barely provide for yourself, so how can you even think of helping others?

Others truly want to help, but just don't have what it takes. They can't stand the heat, so they stay out of the kitchen.

Where are the men and women who would become shining figures amid all the darkness and role models to everyone? Where are the people who actually want to serve others, out of love and not for the sake of publicity or personal gain? Those whose good deeds will live on for everybody else to see and emulate?

I really don't know where they are, but I want to be someone like that. And I'll never let any of these dream-killers bury my ambition. And I hope, for the country's sake, that many others feel the same way. Imagine what we could accomplish if we had just a few of this kind of people.

Gerald C. Sia, 24, is a DLSU management graduate whose burning dream is to be a writer.

Grieving for KC

Patricia E.S. Dimaano

I NEVER had the chance to meet the Speaker's daughter. I didn't know her. She didn't know me. But after tragedy struck, I find myself unexpectedly affected by her passing.

The night the fire broke out, I was at home sleeping. For some reason, I got up really early the following morning, and upon turning on the TV, I learned about the fire. I saw the footage showing the Speaker's house in flames and the family's reaction when KC was being brought out of it.

The scene looked as if it came straight out of a telenovela: a burning house, firemen and policemen, family, relatives and friends—and all that human drama. I would usually watch real-life tragedies on TV without feeling any sympathy for the victims. I'd watch and then go through the rest of the day with a smile on my face as if nothing horrific had happened. The feeling I had this time was like that of losing a member of the family.

It's weird to grieve for someone I didn't know and hadn't even met but KC was different. She was 16. She was too young. She had so much potential. She was going to be a somebody someday, not just the Speaker's daughter.

I got goose bumps when I watched the news. I got goose bumps when I read about her in the papers. I had this desire to go to her wake or burial. I was saddened when people talked casually about her death.

To this day, when I talk about her, it feels like I have lost a younger sister. The image of flames razing the house while she was desperately trying to stay alive in the bathroom is just too horrible to contemplate. How could someone so young and so full of life die such a tragic death? I'm just shocked that such a young life had been taken away so quickly.

I always thought people of her stature were invincible. I guess power, fame and social standing do not and cannot prevent accidents. Tragedies like this happen to everyone. Fires do happen and they do take away people's lives.

After this tragic fire, I realized that the Speaker is human. Even if I only get to see him on the tube only when there's a controversial bill or some controversy involving Congress, he still is human. My heart goes out to him. I hope that he gets through this. I'm going to pray that he gets through this.

I condole with every member of KC's family. Their daughter or sister has touched my life.

I'm sure KC is in a better place now. The Speaker's daughter is now in heaven.

Patricia E.S. Dimaano, 21, is a 5th year BA Journalism student of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She has never prayed this hard for someone she doesn't know.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

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SC's mining decision deadlier than flash floods

WE deplore the decision of the Supreme Court reversing its previous ruling on the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. The Supreme Court's reversal is an affront to our nation's sovereignty and our birthright to control and determine the proper use of our resources for the common good.

Second, the Supreme Court's volte-face serves the interests of foreign mining companies and their business partners in the local elite, while allowing them to continue to extensively devastate our resources and leaving the majority of Filipinos more impoverished than ever. It was no surprise that immediately after the Supreme Court reversal, foreign mining companies, big business, the local elite and President Macapagal-Arroyo extolled it.

Third, the Supreme Court's about-face totally disregards the rights of the indigenous peoples who will be most adversely affected, considering that the remaining areas to be mined are their homelands. In fact, not only does it pave the way for ecocide; it provides license for a genocide in which the principal victims will be our indigenous peoples.

Mining is extractive and worse than commercial logging not only because it despoils the forests, its flora and fauna, the watersheds; it displaces indigenous communities. It also levels to the ground everything within a mining area. Mining's long-term devastating effects will mean more flash floods, landslides and death not only in Quezon, Aurora, Marinduque but in all areas covered by the hundreds of Financial-Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA) and Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSA) approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and now made constitutional by the Supreme Court.

It is a big lie that the poor will benefit from the billions of dollars the country will profit from the mining operations. With patronage politics and corruption, this claim will remain mere rhetoric and will only further enrich the owners of mining corporations and the local elite.

For sure, the affected indigenous communities and their support groups will continue to defend their ancestral lands, as a result of which they will suffer militarization, forced evacuation and all forms of human rights violations.

The decision of the Supreme Court on the Mining Act of 1995 is a prelude to Charter change—to remove all the nationalist provisions of our Constitution. It could indeed be deadlier than the flash floods and landslides that devastated Quezon and Aurora.

It may be well for us to remember: Not all that is made legal is moral or would benefit the majority of Filipinos who are incessantly made poor by our government's domestic and foreign policies.

—SR. ELENITA BELARDO, RGS,
National Network of Agrarian
Reform Advocates,
17-D Kasingkasing St.,
East Kamias, Quezon City;
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Citizen participation in reforestation program

THE AURORA-QUEZON catastrophe once more underscores how urgent it is to reforest our bald mountains. The planting of trees is integral to this solution. And the importance of citizen participation in a tree-planting program need not be overemphasized.

The government by its lonesome cannot meet the environmental challenges facing our country. So each citizen must contribute to the protection and preservation of the environment.

In this light, may I urge all barangay officials to undertake an information campaign on the importance of our forests, watersheds and natural resources.

—STEPHEN P. ALIGO,
punong barangay,
Atok Trail, Baguio City

GSIS' preferential treatment

MARIO Atienza, in his letter, "GSIS' selective exemptions" (PDI, 12/6/04), alleged that the Government Service Insurance System gave the Supreme Court special treatment in reconciling the latter's premium payments records. He said this is something the GSIS cannot extend to other agencies, including the Department of Justice, where Atienza used to work.

Atienza went as far as implying favoritism on the part of GSIS president Winston Garcia because Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is a fellow Cebuano.

This allegation is unfair and baseless. While it is true that the Supreme Court has submitted all required documents for reconciliation—100 percent—Atienza may find comfort in the fact that this is something the DOJ has also accomplished. The same goes for most agencies that work with the GSIS in updating their records.

There is no selective exemption at the GSIS—just a full commitment to update the premium contributions of all its members at the soonest time possible. This is the preferential treatment agencies can expect from the GSIS.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service
Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LETTERS

'Stand by me' plea sign of weakness

THE PRESIDENT has been tagged as the weakest leader in the Southeast Asian region. I never believed this until I heard her "stand by me" plea at the founding anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

For Christ's sake, has she forgotten that she is the commander in chief of the AFP? She is supposed to order the military to protect the democratic establishments, with or without inducements, and the military is expected to stand not only by her but also by the public at large. How could the highest officer of the military implore her subordinates not to leave her? That was clearly a sign of weakness.

A leader who is weak in the face of adversity is vulnerable to being ousted. In the fight for reforms and against corruption, we need a strong leader. She has to be, as she is the one promoting the so-called "Strong Republic." There can be no strong republic with a weak leader.

The President's election may be questionable as it is still the subject of a protest case. But she can never waver and must never compromise with any group, much less with the military. Civilian authority must at all times be supreme over the military.

I did not vote for Ms Arroyo, but whether I like it or not, she is now the President of all Filipinos, including myself. As President, she owes it to us to show strength and prove that she has what it takes to be called a leader.

—JONNEL ESPALDON,
205 Aguirre Ave.,
BF Homes,
Parañaque City

NCCP steadfast against mining

WE take exception to Honesto C. General's view that the National Council of Churches in the Philippines is wrong on the mining law. (PDI, 12/20/04)

Mining, per se, is not the issue here. We realize that a country needs to develop its God-given natural resources. It is the opening up of our resources to wanton plunder by profit-hungry companies that the NCCP is against. Our people's experience is: liberalization of the mining industry, as envisioned in the Mining Act of 1995, will never generate the necessary income to ease the financial crisis that has swept our land and is robbing our poor of their dignity; never, for as long as foreign companies repatriate all profits, equipment and investment to their parent countries; for as long as foreign companies are given 10-year tax holidays, duty-free importation and other investment incentives; for as long as foreign companies are allowed to sell gold directly to the international market without intervention from the Bangko Sentral; for as long as 25-year mining leases are renewable for another 25 years.

The 1995 law might just as well be scrapped because one of its "progressive features," environmental protection, as pointed out by General, is nothing but a blur of legalese. How did the law prevent the collapse of a community in Mankayan? How did the law prevent the death of the Boac River in Marinduque? How does the law prevent mine tailings from flowing into the rivers of Canatuan, Siocon? How can the law stop the mindless open pit mining method that brings about the total destruction of our mountains and makes rehabilitation impossible? And what about the timber rights and water rights granted to foreign companies for whatever they deem necessary for their plunder?

By the way, if the Mining Act of 1995 indeed strongly prohibits mining of ancestral domains (Sections 4 and 16), why is a mining firm hacking away at the lands of Timuay Jose Anoy, an indigenous leader in Mindanao who was awarded a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title by no less than the President herself?

The NCCP remains steadfast in its claim that the Mining Act of 1995 and the Mineral Action Plan cannot propel genuine development. They will cause untold sufferings to people and communities as they already have done. It will be the height of dishonesty and hypocrisy if Christian Churches did not raise their voices against laws that are deceptive and inimical to the welfare of our people. No matter what labels are hurled at us, the NCCP still cries out: Scrap the Mining Act of 1995! Reject the Mineral Action Plan!

—SHARON ROSE JOY
RUIZ-DUREMDES,
general secretary,
National Council of Churches
in the Philippines
879 Edsa, West Triangle, QC

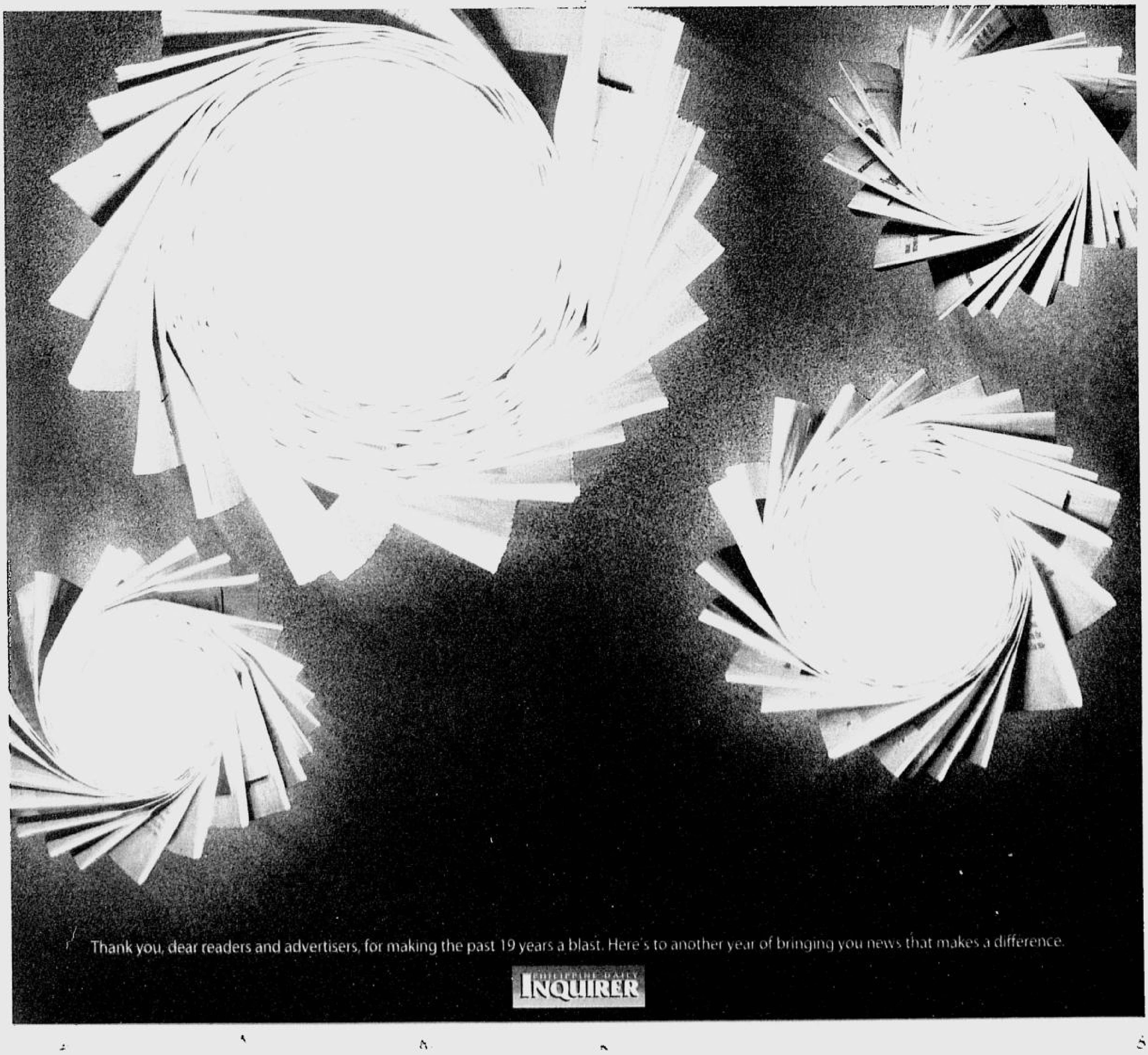
Insensitive banks

THIS concerns a recent withdrawal transaction through an ATM machine of a bank (not my depository). The requested amount, though it was not dispensed by the machine, was nevertheless debited against my account. I immediately reported the matter to my depository bank, thinking it would do its part in following up with the other bank.

Two weeks have passed but I still have not received a positive feedback from any of the banks concerned. Whenever I follow up, either bank would tell me to follow up with the other. I get the feeling both banks believe that I did receive the money. Well, I wouldn't go this far if I did.

It may be a small amount but it was hard-earned and I deserve it. Besides, there might be other people who are in the same predicament as I am. If this kind of problem remains unsolved, people might just as well keep their money in their houses and elsewhere but no longer in banks.

—MARICHU A. ONG,
c/o Francisco V. del Rosario
Holdings Inc., G/F Tuscan Bldg.,
114 VA Rufino St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Rising from the ruins

Bishop backs total log ban in northern Quezon

By Romulo O. Ponte
Infanta, Quezon

BISHOP Rolando J. Tria Tirona was emphatic when he said a total log ban must be immediately implemented in northern Quezon province.

The Carmelite priest said the Prelature of Infanta-Aurora, which he heads, was in such a dreadful situation that a lasting solution to rehabilitate the Sierra Madre mountain range and the lives of the people must be in place.

Tirona wanted wealthy loggers to stop cutting trees, but defended charcoal makers who merely survive on scattered branches and plants to make both ends meet. He urged the government to be considerate with the poor.

"My heart breaks each time I see poor, dirty and sweat-drenched charcoal makers carry sackloads of finished charcoal products for sale along the national highways in the calamity-torn towns or in markets in nearby Laguna towns," Tirona said.

His heart also cried when he sees children along the streets in devastated Real town turn into beggars while they play "traffic aides," holding plastic or tin cans for alms.

The prelate did not comment when asked on running priest Fr. Robert Reyes' proposal for a total log and mining ban in the country.

Reyes said he had recently suggested to Tirona that while the government and politicians were still debating on how to pay those who planted the trees, the Church should initiate massive planting, guarding and protecting of the trees.

"The Church must participate in the reforestation campaign and provide catechism on productivity, which involves nourishment and sustainable farming, and thus, preserve the environment," Reyes had proposed.

Salvaging

In an interview hours before he celebrated the midnight Christmas Mass at the parish church in Infanta town, Tirona said his priests and all flood survivors in Infanta and other towns in the prelature were more preoccupied with salvaging whatever was left by the mud flood and rebuilding their houses.

Some church workers helped the bishop repair his native thatched residence. Before he returned there on Dec. 22, deep mud covered the whole floor area of the structure.

Tirona said his library of expensive books was destroyed by the muddy water that rose as high as two meters.

The adoration room, designed by his chancellor, Fr. Charlito Colendres, who died with the flood, was also ruined.

"I can't yet totally accept that disasters like this would happen to us. My chancellor, Fr. Charlito Colendres, second in command in the prelature, wouldn't allow me yet to rest because my happy memories with him are still fresh. We were always together in my three years stint as a bishop here," Tirona said.

He said he was not shocked that Colendres died during the flood while helping people flee from the swelling river in Barangay Pilaway, 4 km from the convent.

Routine work

"That was routine for both of us. We usually went together to the area to alert residents to evacuate once floodwater threatened to spill over. Had I been around, I am sure I would have been with Father Cha (Colendres' nickname) in helping the people ... And I am not sure if I would be alive today," Tirona said.

The bishop said Cha was actually the second priest who died while helping save lives.

In the 1950s, Carmelite priest Leo McRuden, who was then assigned in Baler, Aurora, was trying to alert the poor fishermen in Baler about an approaching typhoon.

McRuden drowned when his boat capsized.

Tirona said the Carmelites came to northern Quezon and Aurora immediately after World War II.

The bishop said he was organizing priests in the prelature to acquire stress and disaster training skills in conferences in order to prepare them for future challenges as people all over the prelature were "feeling hopeless after the tragedy that struck their lives, properties, future and well being."

Hope

Tirona urged the priests and church people not to worry and to start all over again. "There is still life ahead and hope for all those who survived."

A gigantic Christmas lantern, which the bishop had especially designed in Manila, hung on the forehead of the bowed crucified Christ immediately on top of the Blessed Sacrament on the altar of the Infanta church. It is called the "Parol ng pag-asa ng Prelatura ng Infanta."

The giant Christmas star, which was installed on the altar from day one of the dawn Masses on Dec. 16, was a symbol of life and hope, Tirona said. "Jesus is Life—His light dispelled the darkness. This is the symbol for all the people throughout the prelature amid the debilitating damages wrought by the recent floods."

Parishes in the Aurora side of the prelature also designed their own Christmas lanterns and hung them on top of their center altars to remind parishioners that there was no giving up.

Miracle

Tirona narrated a miracle of the Blessed Mother of Good Voyage that happened in Dingalan, Aurora. At the height of flooding late last month, the entire church was virtually submerged, except for the statue of the Blessed Virgin. Unknown hands had placed the statue on a corner where not a drop of floodwater touched it.

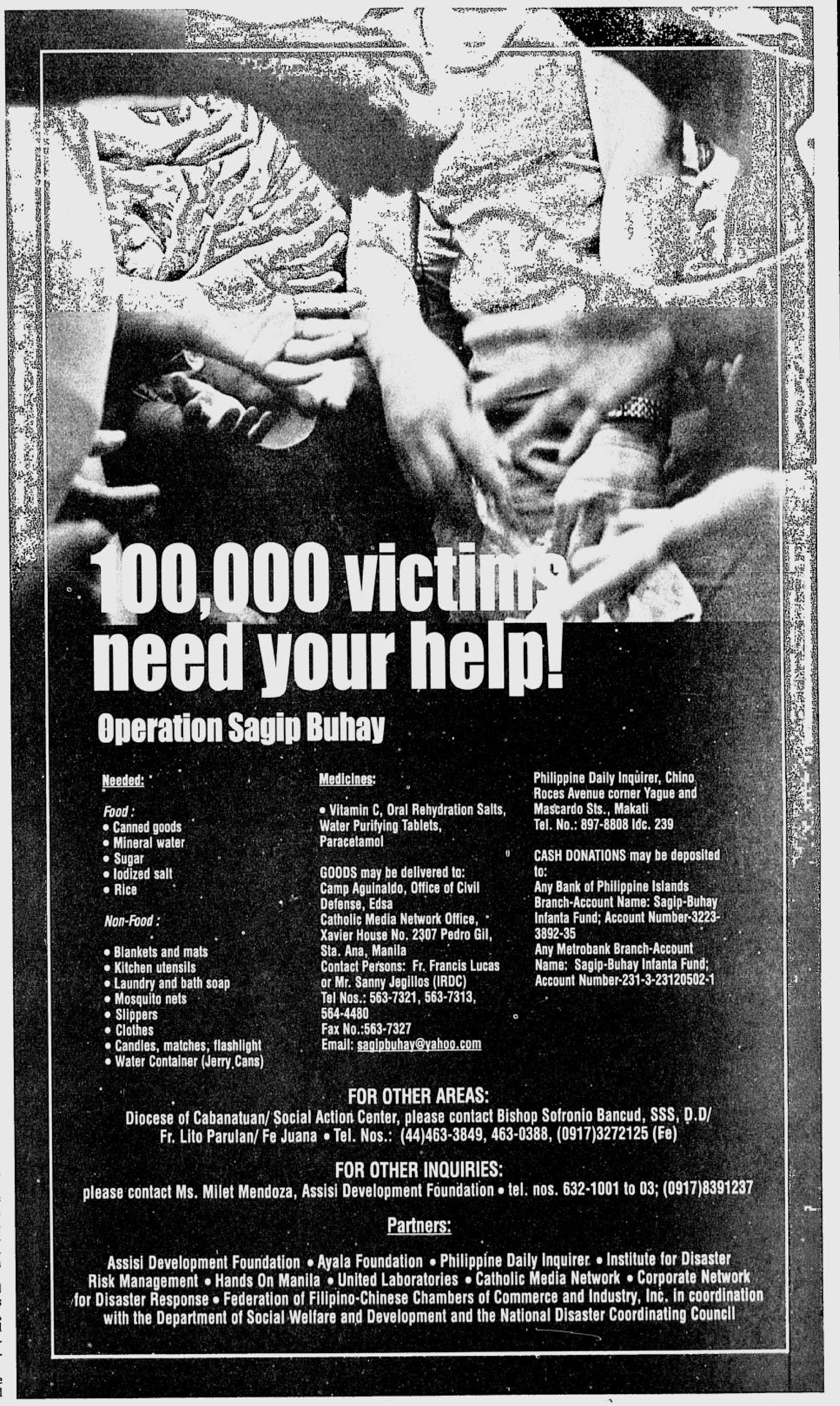
The statue is the only thing inside the church that bore no stain. It has remained pure and clean.

"It is a good sign of hope for all of them in the prelature, for a gracious future ahead," the prelate said.

Tirona said it was obvious that up to the present the people throughout the whole prelature had difficulty believing that such heavy burden would befall them.

Even he himself admitted that he had not yet fully recovered from the shock of seeing the ugly destruction spawned by Tropical Depression "Winnie" and Super Typhoon "Yoyong."

TYPHOON victims line up to get relief goods in front of the St. Mark's Cathedral in Infanta, Quezon, before Christmas Day. REM ZAMORA



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- Mineral water
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- Iodized salt
- Rice

Non-Food :
- Blankets and mats
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- Laundry and bath soap
- Mosquito nets
- Slippers
- Clothes
- Candles, matches, flashlight
- Water Container (Jerry Cans)

Medicines:
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Catholic Media Network Office, Xavier House No. 2307 Pedro Gil, Sta. Ana, Manila
Contact Persons: Fr. Francis Lucas or Mr. Sanny Jegillos (IRDC)
Tel Nos.: 563-7321, 563-7313, 564-4480
Fax No.:563-7327
Email: sagipbuhay@yahoo.com
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati
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EXTINCTION REM ZAMORA
A boy is driven by curiosity to take a closer look at an oversized firecracker designed to look like a dinosaur at a stall in Bocaue, Bulacan, considered the country's firecracker capital. Firecracker traders have been complaining of unfair competition from smuggled products from China.

Cops seize ₱13.6B in drugs for 'shabu'

By Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The police raided three shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) laboratories in Bataan and Bulacan on Wednesday and seized 68,000 kilograms or P13.6-billion worth of ephedrine, the largest haul this year.

Each of the laboratories in Barangay Panilao in Pilar town and Barangay Lucanin in Mariveles town, both in Bataan, contained 600 crates or 30,000 kg of ephedrine, the principal component in the manufacture of shabu, said Senior Supt. Perfecto Palad, Central Luzon police operations chief.

The third factory, located in Barangay Pantok in Meycauayan, Bulacan, yielded 8,000 kg of ephedrine, Palad said.

The Lucanin factory, which the police raided on Wednesday noon, is in a building near a fishpond at Villa Imperial, he said.

The Lucanin and Panilao laboratories were more than 20 km apart.

The one in Lucanin started operations in October while the Panilao laboratory was due for closure and would be replaced by the laboratory in Meycauayan, Palad said.

He said reports indicated that the three laboratories are owned by Paul Tan, a Chinese used to be based in Cebu City until the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group busted the operations of his business partner, Calvin Tan.

Paul Tan, who uses the alias Allan and who claims to be a Taiwanese, is still at large.

Three men, suspected to be caretakers in each of the laboratories, are now in the custody of the police, Palad said.

In Bulacan, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Anselmo Avenido Jr. identified the arrested caretaker of the Pantok laboratory as Rodolfo Quioge.

Avenido said Rene Mendoza, reportedly from Makati City, has been renting the warehouse-compound at the Meycauayan Industrial Subdivision (MIS) in Pantok from Silvestre To.

Edwin Chan, MIS administrator, said Mendoza declared his business as an importer of surplus Korean-made engines that are repaired in the warehouse.

Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, commander of the anti-illegal drug special operations task force, said the Pantok laboratory could produce P1.6-billion worth of shabu in a month or a volume of 200 kg of shabu a week.

The raid, which started at 3 a.m. Wednesday, came after a two-month surveillance, reports said. Judge Natividad Giron-Dizon of the Quezon City regional trial court issued the search warrant.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, CIDG deputy director, said the 3,000-square meter Panilao laboratory used a rice trading and feed milling businesses as fronts. *With reports from Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Nelson Flores, Leila Salaverria and Christian Esguerra in Manila*

Vigilantes kill 11th victim in Cebu City

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Jolene Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The rash of vigilante-style killings of crime suspects in this city continued yesterday, claiming an 11th victim in a span of seven days.

Like in the other string of deaths of suspected snatchers and holduppers, the latest casualty, Henry Milagrosa, 38, an ex-convict and a suspected snatcher, was shot dead by two helmet-wearing motorcycle-riding men while he was walking along General Maxilom Avenue at about 12:15 p.m. yesterday.

Milagrosa was the third suspected criminal to get killed in 24 hours. At about 8 p.m. on Tuesday, suspected robber Donald Velez was also gunned down by two helmet-wearing men in motorcycles at the port area here.

Velez was celebrating his 36th birthday when he was killed. Recovered from him were a rosary and a Bible.

Also on Tuesday, at 8:35 p.m., suspected robber Jurie Basillote, who was seriously injured in last Monday's attack of motorcycle-riding men along D. Jakosalem and Colon Streets, died at the Cebu City Medical Center.

Basillote's two companions, Jomar David and Rolando Taberon, died on the spot in Monday's attack.

The series of killings, which began dawn of Dec. 23, has alarmed leaders of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and militant human rights groups in Cebu but were also applauded by anti-crime groups.

CPP claims strength; Army scoffs at report

DAVAO CITY—The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said its membership in Mindanao increased by 33 percent this year compared to the previous year.

Although the CPP did not provide figures for comparison, it said in a statement that its members are practically everywhere.

"Several party branches are also found in many localities—in the barrios, in urban poor communities, in schools, factories and some offices," the CPP statement said.

It said it also effectively "led the masses in advancing the protracted people's war and the open democratic mass movement."

"Support for the party is swelling . . .," it said.

The CPP said it was looking forward to 2005, when "the party will surely achieve more victories."

"Such is inevitable because it continues to uphold the correct line and policies that serve the interest of the masses . . .," it said.

But a ranking military official in Southern Mindanao said the CPP statement was "propaganda."

"Are they daydreaming? There's no expansion because they can't even get the support of the masses. They just make the story big in the newspapers but in reality they don't have the support of the masses both in urban and rural areas," Col. Eduardo del Rosario, Task Force Davao chief, said.

Del Rosario said the number of people joining the communist movement has been waning.

Del Rosario said an example of waning support for the CPP was the small number of people who join the group's protest rallies.

"In the 1980s, they could easily gather thousands of supporters during rallies. Nowadays, they can only gather 40 to 60 people (to attend a rally)," he said. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DOH says Baguio City market main source of 'meningo' cases

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Department of Health has identified the general vicinity of the Baguio City market in the central business district here as the primary source of cases of meningococcemia, a fatal strain of meningitis.

In a press conference on late Tuesday afternoon, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said health investigators reached this conclusion after careful analysis of information from meningococcemia patients.

Dr. Manuel Factora, director of the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, said the first meningococcemia victims either worked in the market or were in close contact with people working there.

The BGHMC also reported two more suspected meningococcemia-related deaths in the past three days. Among the latest fatalities were a 31-year-old man and a four-year-old son of a nurse said to have been in close contact with meningococcemia patients.

Factora said one of the latest victims is a 14-year-old market vendor.

Dayrit, however, said people should not panic and avoid the city market like the plague.

"Meningococcemia is a close contact disease which means you have to interact with an infected person for a long time and not by casual contact," he said.

"You don't get it by just going to the market but you have to hang around there for hours," Dayrit added.

In the same press conference, Dr. Jean Marc Olive, World Health Organization representative, also reiterated that a person could not be infected with meningococcemia just by going to the market.

"You need close and constant exposure," Olive said.

Dayrit said the DOH has recorded 16 meningococcemia deaths in Baguio and Benguet over the past three months. He said at least seven suspected meningococcemia cases were reported from Dec. 26 to Dec. 28.

The DOH, Dayrit said, has already started giving preventive antibiotic treatment to more than 4,000 vendors and jeepney drivers in the market whom they perceived to be primary contacts of suspected meningococcemia patients.

However, the recent occurrence of seven cases over the past three days has been traced to several barangays, Dayrit said.

DOH officials said they would provide additional funds to buy preventive antibiotics.

Peter Sagayo, Baguio Market Vendors Association (Bamarva) president, said vendors did not panic when the news was relayed to them.

"We announced it section by section so we won't alarm them," he said.

Gloria says Chavit will remain ally

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ILOCOS SUR Gov. Luis Singson and private prosecutors in the plunder case against ousted President Joseph Estrada gesture the thumbs down sign to protest the clearance given the ousted leader to leave for Hong Kong for a knee surgery. PDI FILE PHOTO

BAGUIO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo said Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson remains her ally, brushing off threats that Singson made to jump ship over jailed former President Joseph Estrada's medical treatment in Hong Kong.

Despite Singson's criticism of her administration, "he (Singson) is an ally (and) he remains an ally," the President said.

But top Malacañang officials said Singson is under investigation for anomalies that may hurt the Arroyo administration.

"(Ms Arroyo) already won her mandate so all her political debts have been paid. She will not want to be buried in anomalies now, especially when (Singson) has become a political burden," a Malacañang official said here.

Singson had publicly challenged the President to prevent Estrada's trip to Hong Kong or see him leave the administration coalition.

He issued the statements even before police officials leaked a report detailing how a cigarette factory inside Singson's Satrap Construction Corp. Compound in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, was raided this month for allegedly manufacturing fake cigarette brands.

Singson denied police claims that the factory, which was leased to a businessman named Lim, had illegal transactions.

Ms Arroyo told reporters at the Presidential Mansion here that the Sandiganbayan's decision to allow Estrada's medical treatment was a precedent for other detainees of lesser stature who required the same humane treatment.

In a telephone interview on Tuesday, Singson said the President is "correct" because he remains a member of Ms Arroyo's political coalition.

But he refused to discuss the sentiments being aired by Palace officials who are now investigating his transactions.

"If they come out in the open, then I will answer them point by point. But until they do, they are simply sowing intrigue. Nothing more," Singson said.

The Malacañang source said Singson had been a very influential power broker after Estrada's ouster in 2001.

"He managed to grant his allies very good positions (in Ms Arroyo's Cabinet)," the official said. *With a report from Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Mom of jailed ex-solon urges pardon for son

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The 82-year-old mother of convicted rapist, former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, has appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant her son a presidential pardon "in the spirit of Christmas."

Jalosjos is serving two life terms for statutory rape.

But Angelina Jalosjos said her son is in a pitiful condition these days.

"My son is very ill . . . please Madam President, have mercy, please release my son," a sobbing Mrs. Jalosjos said yesterday.

Jalosjos is confined at the Makati Medical Center after two strokes.

Mrs. Jalosjos said she wanted to visit her son but she is already "very old."

"My only wish is to see my son alive and free . . . I am begging the President to forgive my son," she said.

"For the people that my son has offended before, please forgive him in the name of the Lord and in the spirit of Christmas. He has been suffering for so many years now," she said.

Earlier reports quoted Dr. Perry Noble, Jalosjos' doctor, as saying the former legislator is a "perennial candidate for a stroke." *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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SUERTRES 9 6 5

FOUR DIGIT 7 7 1 4

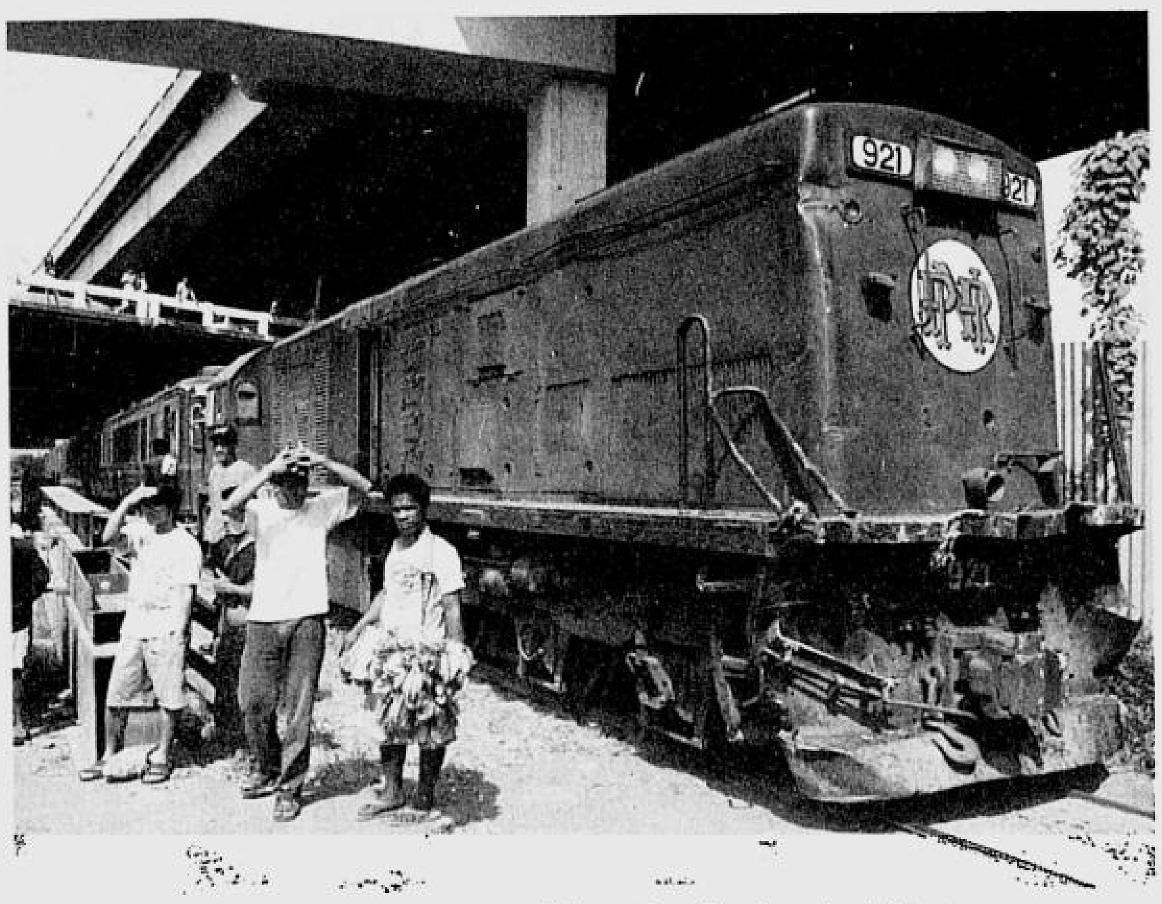
(In exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45 3 5 9 17 38 42

SWEEPSTAKES 1 7 0 1 0 2 L

Train mishap victims robbed

By Nancy C. Carvajal



TRAIN No. 921 shows the scars of yesterday's collision at the railroad crossing in Bicutan. ERIC ARAZAS

NOT EVEN cries for help stopped looters from preying on victims of a collision involving a Laguna-bound train and a bus in Bicutan, Taguig, late yesterday morning.

"I was bleeding and in pain when they grabbed the morning's earnings inside my waist bag," said Minerva Rabano, conductress of the ill-fated MGP bus that was rammed by the train.

She said the money was worth about P1,000.

Rabano recalled that although she was feeling dizzy while still unable to move in between the seats of the bus, she felt someone taking her cell phone from the left breast pocket of her blouse.

"I thought they came to help us but they instead stole the bags of the other victims," Rabano said.

She suffered a swollen nose bridge and a cut on the right leg.

Another bus passenger Myra Leyson, who suffered a cut on her forehead and a swollen face, witnessed the looting and heard other victims airing the same complaint.

While looters stormed the badly damaged bus, most of the injured reportedly had to get out unaided because there was no one to help them.

Leyson said they had to take passenger jeepneys in going to the hospital.

SPO2 Peter Cententa, traffic investigator from the Taguig police station, confirmed the reported looting, adding that it was already being investigated on.

Cententa said looters also tried to cannibalize the bus engine but were prevented from doing so by the arrival of members of the Taguig police.

Investigation showed that the MGP bus with body number 9207 was over the tracks at the Bicutan railroad crossing at about 11:30 a.m. when it was hit on the right side by the Philippine National Railways train.

The bus had just left the Food Terminal Inc. and was on its way to Navotas when the incident happened.

The bus was dragged by the train for about three meters from the railroad crossing.

"Our investigation indicated that the bus driver was busy talking with the conductress, which could have been the reason why he failed to see the approaching train," Cententa said.

The bus driver, identified only as a certain Buhatin, fled from the scene and is now the subject of a police manhunt for possible filing of criminal charges.

Emil Pajarillo, son of the owner of the PVP Bus Line, said the driver had been on the job for only two weeks. He added that the driver could have fled for fear of his life.

Pajarillo was at the Taguig-Pateros District Hospital to pay for the treatment of the injured passengers.

At least 28 passengers were reported by the police to have been injured and were brought to different hospitals, which also included the South Super Highway Hospital and the San Juan De Dios Hospital in Pasay City.

Of the injured passengers, only three suffered serious cuts that had to be sutured, said Jacinta Garcia, chief nurse of the TPDH.

Dr. Rene Arce, a TPDH doctor, said almost all the injured passengers were released the same day after receiving treatment, mostly for bruises and abrasions.

Arce said a family of four were transferred to the San Juan De Dios Hospital in Pasay City for further treatment since one of the children suffered serious head injuries.

Such accidents are common in the country because of a lack of or broken railway booms and safety signs. *With a report from AP*

Fireworks zones set for Metro

By Tina G. Santos

FIRECRACKER and pyrotechnic zones would be set up in different areas of Metro Manila in an effort to reduce the number of injuries and deaths that usually accompany celebrations welcoming the New Year.

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Director Razon said the five police district directors and station commanders had been coordinating with the local government, particularly barangay officials, for the establishment of areas where the public could set off firecrackers or fireworks displays.

Razon, however, urged the public to use other noisemakers instead of firecrackers to welcome the New Year.

"Apart from being dangerous, exploding firecrackers is an expensive way to celebrate the occasion," Razon said.

"We would be better off just spending money on food that the entire family could enjoy," he added.

The NCRPO chief also ordered a metro-wide crackdown against distributors, manufacturers, and sellers of firecrackers.

Razon said policemen manning the checkpoints should conduct random checks on vehicles to prevent the entry of firecrackers in the metropolis.

Some Metro residents, however, said the proposed designation of pyrotechnics zones would not be successful since many revelers would want to light up firecrackers in front of their homes.

"Setting off firecrackers in front of our house has long been a tradition in our family," said Merly Tamayo, a freelance writer from Quezon City.

Jerry Estrada, an engineer, said going to a designated area would be "a hassle." His family would just light firecrackers in their yard instead of going all the way to the firecrackers zone, he said.

Although Quezon City does not have firecracker zones, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said they would provide a free 15-minute fireworks display near city hall for everyone to watch.

No bail for NFA exec charged with murder

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FOR THE DEATH of a colleague, a National Food Authority (NFA) official now faces a murder trial.

The City Prosecutor's Office of Manila has filed charges of murder and frustrated murder against NFA manager Ferdinand Satuito, who was arrested in November for the slay of an NFA union leader and the wounding of another NFA employee.

In a resolution dated Dec. 20, assistant city prosecutor Raymunda Cruz-Apolo found probable cause in the charges against Satuito.

Sufficient grounds

"There exists sufficient ground to indict the respondent with the crimes of murder and frustrated murder… There is treachery where the respondent suddenly and without warning shot the victims who were unarmed and defenseless at the time," said the investigating prosecutor in her resolution.

The case was filed on Dec. 23 before the sala of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 40 Judge Placido Marquez.

Satuito allegedly shot Reynaldo Capones, 44, head of the NFA Employees Association of the National Capital Region division, and Romeo Ver, grains operations officer, more than a month ago in the parking lot of the NFA compound at the corner of United Nations Avenue and Quirino Avenue in Paco, Manila.

Satuito, 59, reportedly fired several shots at Capones after the latter put his arm around the NFA manager as they walked to the parking lot. They had just come from a drinking session at about 9 p.m on Nov. 25.

Capones' gesture had reportedly irked Satuito, who went to his car where he got a 45-caliber pistol and shot at Capones.

Hit three times

The victim was hit thrice in his abdomen, and once on his right thigh, left arm and back.

Satuitio then also allegedly shot Ver when the latter tried to help Capones.

The accused, in his reply to the charges, said the shooting was not intentional, but was "spur of the moment."

Satuito claimed that NFA employees, among them Capones and Ver, ganged up on him on the night of the shooting.

He alleged that he only fired warning shots, and that the gun went off several times as he and one Wilson Rosales, another NFA employee, grappled for the gun.

The City Prosecutor's Office, however, found statements of eyewitnesses enough evidence to indict Satuito for the charges.

Makati to honor local heroes

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AS A TRIBUTE to the city's heroes, the Makati City government will today hold a memorial service in honor of police officers killed in the line of duty.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, along with the city's police force, city officials, residents and the private sector, will pay special tribute to P/Cpl. Enrico Camino, who was slain in a shoot-out with robbers more than a decade ago.

"This very special day will be a day dedicated to our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal and the heroes of Makati, among them Camino and the gallant men and women of the Makati police," Binay said in a statement.

Camino was killed when he foiled a robbery attempt by several armed men who forcibly entered a business establishment in Barangay Pio del Pilar in 1990.

Binay, together with National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon, Southern Police District Director Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia, and Makati chief of police Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, will give the "General Romeo Laygo Peña Achiever Award" to Camino's widow.

The other honorees are: Chief Insp. Nestor Salvador, Sr. Insp. Roberto Gutierrez, Col. Herminio Taylo, SPO4 Mario Sayao, SPO4 Rosita Lacay, Corporal Enrique Era, SPO3 Roberto Nicolas, SPO2 Alejandro Dimaya, SPO2 Nolito Valizado, SPO2 Honesto Aldave, PO3 Wilfredo Villarama, PO2 Renato Trinidad and PO2 Aristotle Tacata.

The service will begin with a Mass followed by a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the MPD headquarters, the mayor said.

Binay said the city would also recognize the people behind the creation of the Makati Police Foundation, an organization that extends financial assistance and other forms of aid to families of slain Makati policemen. The foundation is made up of city officials, businessmen, civic leaders and prominent residents.

SC fines judge for cursing lawyer in court

By Philip C. Tubeza

DON'T say bad words.

The Supreme Court has slapped a retired Caloocan judge with a P21,000 fine for cursing inside a court room.

In a 14-page decision on Dec. 16, the High Court disciplined former Judge Antonio J. Fineza, of the Caloocan Regional Trial Court Branch 131 after he hurled "vulgar and insulting words" against lawyer Antonio Seludo during a hearing before another judge on July 8, 2003.

"Besides possessing the requisite learning in the law, a magistrate must exhibit that hallmark judicial temperament of utmost sobriety and self-restraint which is indispensable qualities of every judge. A judge should be the last person to be perceived as petty, sharp-tongued tyrant," stated the decision penned by Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez.

"Sadly, (Fineza) failed to live up to such standards of judicial conduct," it added.

Seludo tried to withdraw the complaint in January after Fineza retired but the high court still ordered that the P21,000 be deducted from Fineza's retirement benefits.

Court records showed that Fineza's temper exploded while attending a hearing on July 8, 2003, on his complaint for the revocation of notarial commission against lawyer Seludo.

"Your mother's a whore!" Fineza shouted at Seludo when he noticed the lawyer laughing.

"Why is he laughing? Let it be put on record that he has a moronic attitude. That's why he was laughing… I don't know if this guy is really stupid," he added.

He also challenged Seludo's grasp of the English language.

The presiding judge advised Fineza to calm down and the erring magistrate apologized.

In his explanation to the high court, Fineza admitted that he uttered the expletives but added that he had been suffering from a heart ailment and diabetes since November 2002, causing him "considerable anxiety and pain."

He also blamed Seludo, whom he said was "unkind and impolite to him" and kept interrupting him. The tribunal, however, was not convinced.

"(He) displayed a conduct so unbecoming of a magistrate. The remarks uttered are patently defamatory and outrageous," the court said.

"His disgraceful behavior tainted the good image of the judiciary he is expected to uphold at all times," it added.

Hope for the better, one thing going for us

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

RESULTS of a survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) conducted nationwide from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2 showed that 81 percent of Filipinos were hopeful about the New Year.

This means that eight out of 10 Filipinos hope that their lot would improve in 2005.

That's typically Pinoy, perennially optimistic. In the midst of adversity, Filipinos are able to laugh because they know that tomorrow brings a new day, a new hope.

If there's one thing going for the Pinoy, it's a positive mental attitude.

We create our own state of being. What we think becomes our own reality. If we think things will become better after a calamity or misfortune, then things will turn for the better. If we think that our lot will not improve, then things will remain the same for us.

There's a saying that nothing is permanent, that everything changes. We should not be too happy that we're up there, because someday we'll go down. We should not be too sad that a series of ill luck has come down on us because such misfortunes will not be forever.

Look at the Marcoses. Who would have thought before 1986 that they would come crashing down from the peak of power? Now, Imelda Marcos is no longer feared, she's a laughingstock. Nobody would have laughed at her when her husband was in power even when she was mouthing such nonsense such as Manila being the "city of man."

There's a saying that one should greet people on his way to the top because those are the same people he will meet on his way down.

Such is that balance of nature. The yin and the yang, male and female, good and evil, day and night, light and darkness.

When things are going bad now, look up or hope for a new day. Because a new day will certainly come.

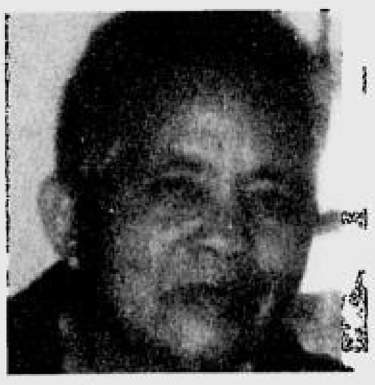
But we Filipinos should work hard at having a bright new day. This means we should do something to improve our lot.

Look at Japan. It was a devastated nation after World War II. The Japanese worked overtime to get their country back to its pre-World War II status. Not only has Japan recovered from the massive destructions of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it has overtaken many countries economically.

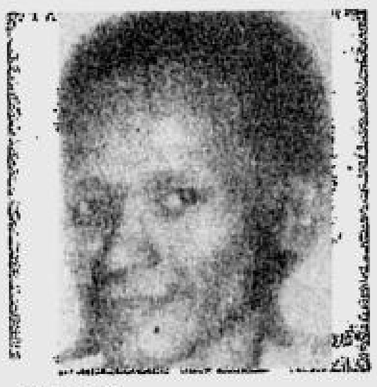
Look at South Korea. After the Korean War in the 1950s, the South Koreans started reconstructing their country, toiling day and night. Now, South Korea is an economic giant in Asia.

Look at Taiwan. In the 1960s, Pinoy playboys who would visit Taipei would bring with them many bars of bath soap. With two bars, a Pinoy playboy would be able to seduce an office girl, bath soap being a luxury in Taiwan at the time. Now, things have been reversed. Tens of thousands of our men and women work as domestics in Taiwan households and factories.

If we are optimistic and convert such optimism into hard work, things will become better for us not only in 2005 but also in the years after.



ALBAY



ARAGON

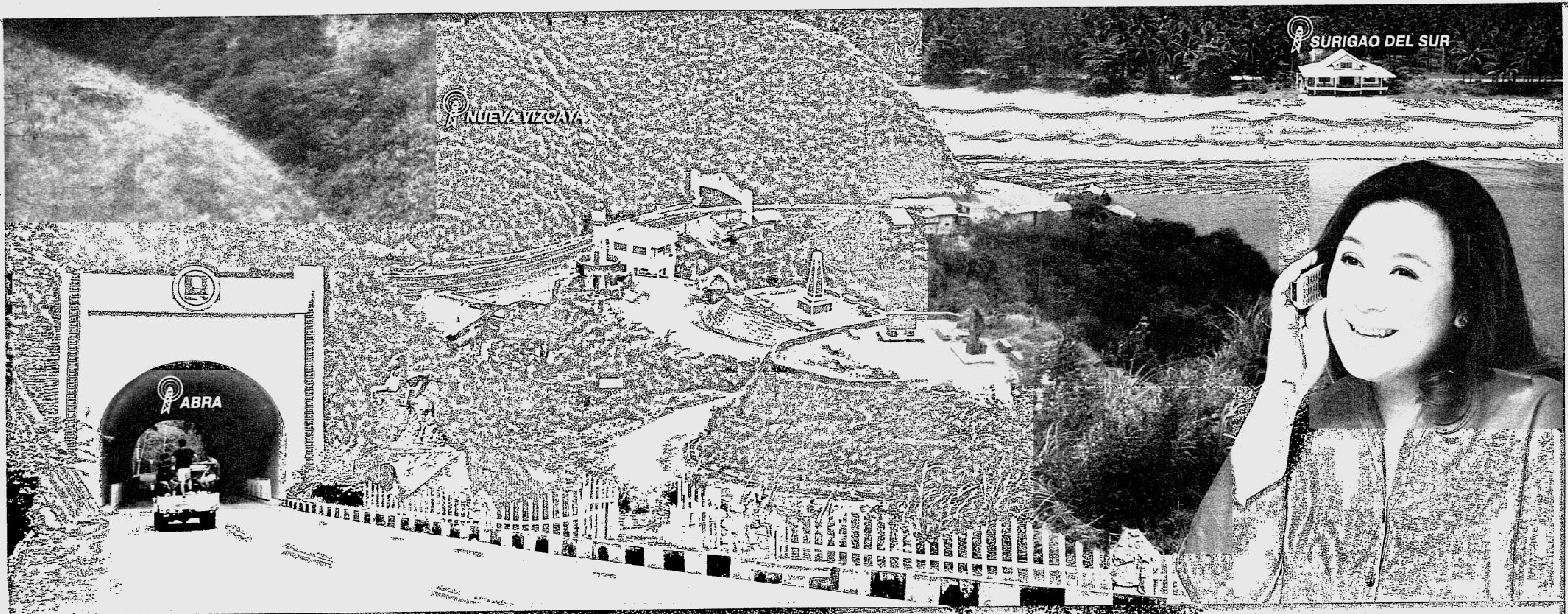
Have you seen them?

PERCELITO Albay, 64, left his home at 19-B Sto. Niño, Barangay San Antonio, San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, on Dec. 21 and has not been seen since. He was wearing a white T-shirt marked "Boysen," short pants and blue sandals. Any information on his whereabouts can be relayed to his wife Lita at telephone number 413-2142.

NESTOR G. Aragon has been reported missing since Nov. 24 this year.

He was last seen wearing a red T-shirt and shorts.

Anyone who has seen him or has any information regarding his whereabouts may call any of the following numbers: 783-2449, 731-8462, 711-2616 or 529-0492.



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Don't miss your favorite TV shows! Check out today's Inquirer TV Guide in the Entertainment section Happy Viewing!

Cebu needs ₱12M for SEA Games

By Marc Anthony Reyes

EVEN in the sub sites of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, money is of utmost concern.

Cebu City, which will host six sports events in the SEAG, is looking for ways to source out at least P9.5 million to cover the expenses of bringing the 11-nation sporting spectacle down south for the very first time.

This is after the city government of Cebu City declared that it can only shell out P2.5 million of the projected P12 million budget for the SEAG events it is staging like dancesport, judo, taekwondo, sepak takraw, pencak silat and karatedo.

Cebu City is one of the four sites of the 2005 Games along with Metro Manila, Subic and Bacolod City.

All in all, the SEAG organizers estimated the event to cost between P800 million to P1 billion. Bacolod City alone is projecting P50 million for the five events it is hosting namely boxing, men's football, weightlifting, volleyball and beach volleyball.

The CebuSoc (Cebu SEAG Organizing Committee) will be headed by Mayor Tomas Osmeña, who will serve as the honorary chair. Cebu City Sports Commission chair Jonathan Guardo and Councilor Jack Jakosalem will serve as the chair and vice chair of the committee, respectively.

The Board of Trustees includes Vice Mayor Mike Rama, Rep. Raul del Mar and Antonio Cuenco, lawyer Augusto Go, Cheryl Ouano, Boying Rodriguez, Charles Lim, Koko Holganza and Gwen Garcia

Other committee heads include Councilor Jocelyn Pesquera for Finance, Patrick Gregorio for Marketing, Marcie Abesamis for Food and Accommodation, Dr. Pek Eng Lim for Medical Assistance, Nimrod Quinones for Press and Publicity, Dolly Suzara for Civic Participation and Allan Torrevillas for Secretariat.

P/Supt. Melvin Gayotin will be the head for Security and Traffic, Dr. Danilo Villadolid for Technical Operations, Councilor Gerry Carillo for Transportation and Communication, Joy Augustus Young for Venues and Infrastructure and Lita Urbana for Volunteers. Ricky Ballesteros will serve as the Chief Operating Officer.

Cebu SOC will hold its office at the Philippine Sports Commission office at the Cebu City Sports Center. The Organizing Committee will meet regularly starting next month to give updates on their respective fields.

"We are very thankful for everyone's support," said Guardo. "The participation of these individuals will serve as a huge factor in the success of the city's hosting."

Dancesport and judo will be staged at the Waterfront Hotel Lahug, taekwondo at the Cebu Coliseum, sepak takraw at the University San Carlos, and pencak silat and karatedo at the Mandaue Coliseum.

No leaks on RP coach, says Eala

By June Navarro

PHILIPPINE Basketball Association commissioner Noli Eala has guaranteed that his choice of the national team coach will not be announced prematurely.

Eala yesterday brushed aside insinuations that the head coach of the PBA-backed national team to the Asian championships had already been leaked to the media.

"That's impossible," Eala told the INQUIRER. "It's all stored in my laptop and I have not printed it yet. Nobody knows about it even the other members of the committee who screened the applicants,"

Though admitting that he has already made up his mind on whom to appoint, Eala vowed not to make the choice public until the PBA Board of Governors gives its nod in a special meeting on Jan. 4.

Talk 'N Text's Joel Banal, Chot Reyes of Coca-Cola, Red Bull Barako's Yeng Guiao and Tim Cone of Alaska are the candidates.

They were made to give Eala and the other members of the screening committee written insights on how to run the national team for the next four years.

"A major part of my decision was based on the questionnaires that the candidates answered. I believe it is more objective than the interview part," said Eala.

All the candidates have national team experience, with Cone and Reyes having worked together in the bronze-winning PBA all-star team in the 1998 Asian Games.

Guiao also served as assistant coach earlier in his career. Banal was both player and coach, having called the shots for an MBA team in an Asian tournament before making the jump to the PBA.

Eala also got some piece of advice from San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico, who steered the RP team composed of PBA stars to a fourth-place finish in the 2002 Busan Asiad.

The national team will compete in the Asian Championships next year and in 2007 to qualify for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

REYES: Still going strong at 50

PDI PHOTO

Bata, Pagulayan top 2004 money list

FILIPINO billiard masters Efren "Bata" Reyes and Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan top the 2004 player money list, according to reports from the AZ billiards website yesterday.

The 50-year-old Reyes occupied the No. 1 spot with $124,150 (around P7.4 million) earnings from seven events in 16 local and international tournaments including the $20,000 prize at the World 8-Ball championship in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

Pagulayan took second place with a total paycheck of $118,183.

Reyes also topped the Derby City Class 1 Pocket Division, Derby City Classic Overall Champion Bonus, On Cue 3 Continental Conquest and three of four legs in the SMB Asian 9-Ball Tour Classic.

Pagulayan won the World 9-Ball Championship by beating Chang Pei Wei, 17-13, to bring home the top purse of $75,000.

Francisco "Django" Bustamante landed at 13th place after receiving a total prize money of $48,200.

He topped the World Pool League in Warsaw, Poland for a $20,000 grand prize.

American Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer, the 2003 top grosser, slipped to fifth place this year after earning $88,537, including the $30,000 top prize in the Derby Classic Ring Game No. 2.

Other cue artists in the top 10 are Allison Fisher ($96,300), Rodney Morris ($87,367), Jeanette Lee ($61,793), Karen Corr ($77,490), Corey Deuel ($75,968), Niels Feijen ($71,350) and Thomas Engert ($56,900).

Meanwhile, Reyes, Pagulayan and Bustamante will be honored in the Philippine Sportswriter Association awards night on Jan. 13 at the Manila Pavilion.

The trio was also invited in the UPA Pro Tour Championships at the The Bicycle Casino in Bell Gardens, Los Angeles, California, USA from Jan. 4 to 9. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Arroyo sets pledging session Jan. 18

FIRST Gentleman Mike Arroyo will buckle down to work after the holidays by tapping the support of sports godfathers in a series of pledging sessions that will raise funds for the country's athletes seeing action in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

The initial pledging session is set on Jan. 18 next year at the Heroes Hall of Malacañang, with executives of government and private firms invited by Mr. Arroyo to lend a hand in the buildup of Pinoy athletes.

The affair will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be graced by sports officials and some of the first batch of athletes who passed the stringent criteria laid down by the Medalyang Ginto Executive Council of the First Gentleman Foundation, which screened the list of athletes recommended by the country's national sports associations.

A pledging session was supposed to be held last Dec. 11 but was called off by Mr. Arroyo so he could focus his efforts in helping victims of several typhoons that hit the country recently.

A total of 248 athletes, many of them gold medalists in last year's Vietnam Southeast Asian Games and various international events, make up the first batch of beneficiaries to be known as "Team Tagumpay."

The breakdown of the initial beneficiaries: Diving 6, swimming 7, archery 3, athletics 8, baseball 22, basketball (men's) 17, billiards-snooker 3, boxing 5, bowling 12, canoe-kayak 5, chess 4, cycling 2, dragon boat 39, equestrian 2, fencing 9, golf 7, gymnastics 2, judo 3, karatedo 5, lawn bowls-petanque 12, muay thai 2, rowing 6, shooting 4, softball (men's and women's) 41, taekwondo 10, triathlon 5, wrestling 1 and wushu 6.

A similar fund-raising affair held by Mr. Arroyo last year raised more than P22 million that financed the training and buildup of athletes for the Vietnam SEA Games, where the country bagged 49 gold medals.

A total of 18 government and private corporations, led by San Miguel Corp., supported last year's fund-raising efforts.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. and Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee chief Roberto Pagdanganan will grace the affair.

The Medalyang Ginto Executive Council will continue to monitor the performance of Pinoy athletes in various international events.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA–Alabama vs Wisconsin; 8:30 a.m.; ESPN–The Crimson Tide hopes to wipe out the Badgers.

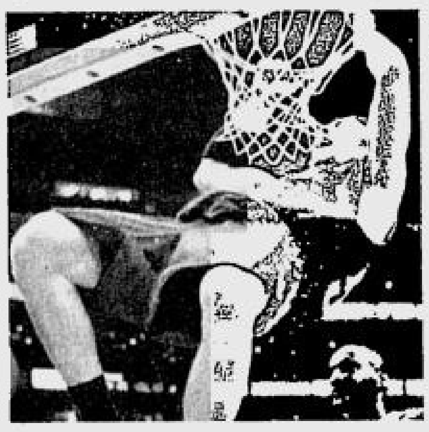
NBA–Jazz vs Clippers; 11:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports–Struggling Utah takes on surprising LA.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: 2004 Continental Tire Bowl; tomorrow at 2 a.m.; ESPN–Boston College clashes with North Carolina in Texas.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- LeBron lifts Cavs; Spurs shade Suns/A20
- Life's lesson from Tony /A20



- Australian maxi tops yacht race /A20

- Aces, dubs mark Philippine golf /A21
- Marquez wants $1.5M to fight Paquiao /A21

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SUN CELLULAR

Everything Important is Under the Sun

LeBron lifts Cavs; Spurs shade Suns

NEW YORK—LeBron James had 40 points, nine rebounds and seven assists two days before his 20th birthday to guide the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 111-102 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday.

James finished just three points away from matching his career high, which he set last month against Detroit, while hitting the 30-point mark for the seventh time this season.

He also became the youngest player ever to record 500 career assists and 500 career rebounds.

The Cavaliers (17-11) won for the third time in four games while winning for the fifth successive time against the Hawks.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 20 points and eight rebounds for the Cavaliers, while Jeff McInnis also scored 20 points for Cleveland.

Al Harrington scored a season-high 31 points to lead the Hawks, while Antoine Walker had 17 points and nine rebounds.

Tony Delk chipped in with 13 points for Atlanta, which has lost seven of its last eight games.

Elsewhere, Michael Redd scored 28 points as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Houston Rockets, 115-87.

Desmond Mason added 24 points and Marcus Fizer had 15 points and seven rebounds for the Bucks, who won consecutive games for just the second time this season.

Tracy McGrady scored 20 points to lead Houston, while Yao Ming was limited to 10 points and three rebounds.

In San Antonio, Tony Parker scored a season-high 29 points in just 30 minutes to hand the Spurs a 115-94 win over the Phoenix Suns.

Tim Duncan had 16 points and 12 rebounds for San Antonio, which snapped the Suns 11-game winning streak.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki had 29 points and 11 rebounds as the Mavericks stopped the Boston Celtics, 113-94.

Michael Finley added 21 points for the Mavericks, who roared into a 28-point halftime lead.

Paul Pierce and Jiri Welsch had 17 points each for Boston.

In Chicago, Vince Carter scored 25 points to steer the New Jersey Nets to an 84-80 win over the Bulls.

Richard Jefferson and Nenad Krstic both added 17 points for New Jersey.

Kirk Hinrich had 30 points to lead Chicago.

In Seattle, Allen Iverson continued his torrid shooting with 34 points, nine rebounds and seven assists as the Philadelphia 76ers edged the SuperSonics, 114-107.

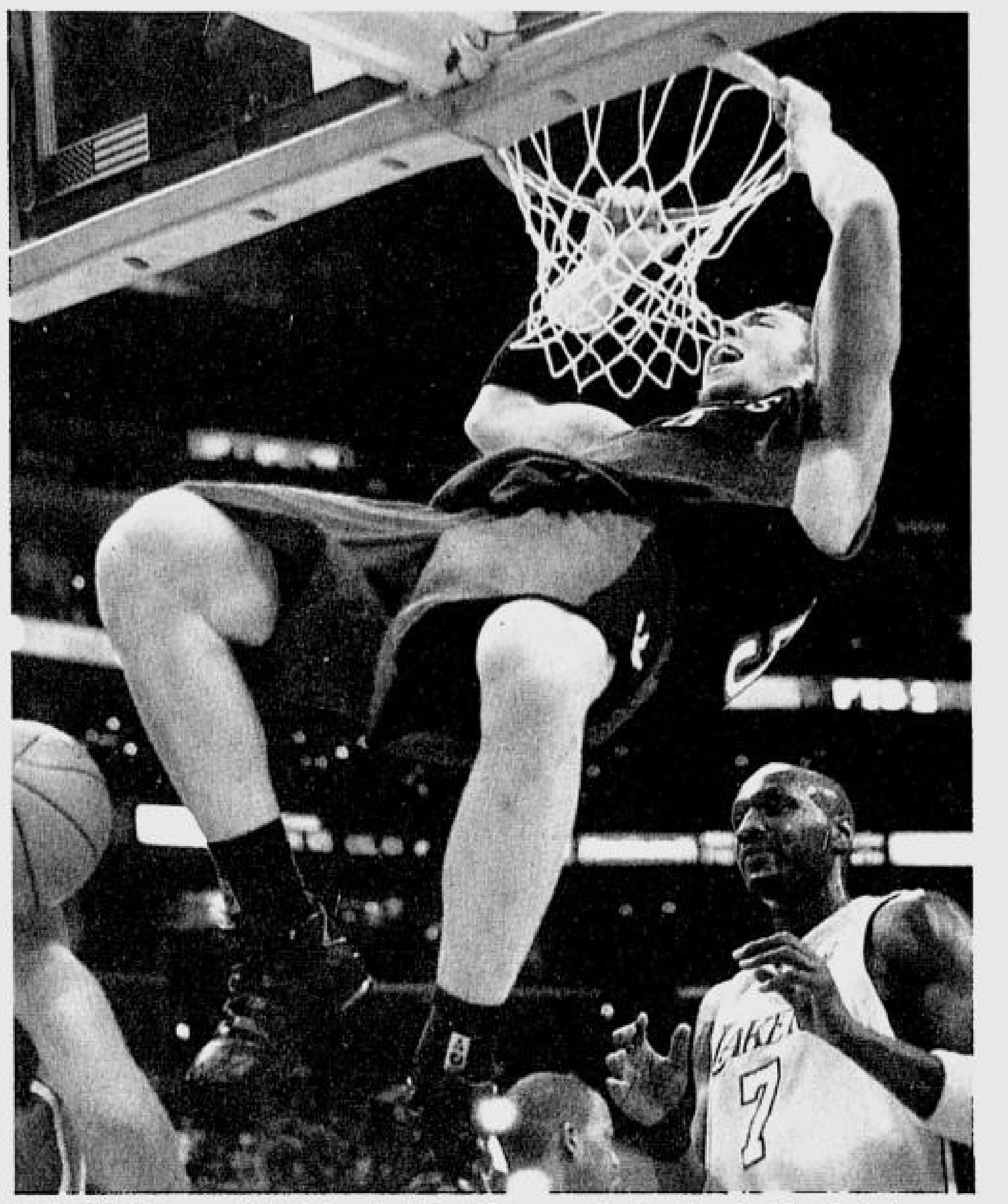
Willie Green added 20 points for the Sixers (13-14), while Kenny Thomas added 15.

Ray Allen had 32 points and eight assists for the Sonics, who lost for just the sixth time in 26 games.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 48 points as the Lakers held off the Toronto Raptors, 117-99.

Caron Butler scored 18 points for the Lakers, while Lamar Odom had 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Rafer Alston had 13 points and 11 assists for the Raptors. *Reuters*



TORONTO Raptors' Rafael Araujo of Brazil hangs on the rim after dunking the ball over Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom (7) in the first half in Los Angeles, Tuesday. AP

Season-opening ATP Indian Open pushing through despite calamity

MADRAS—The season-opening ATP Indian Open will go ahead as scheduled next week in the southern city of Madras despite the heavy death toll caused by tsunami tidal waves in the area, organizers said on Wednesday.

"The tournament is definitely on and no player has pulled out," said Ravi Krishnan of the International Management Group (IMG), which has organized the event for the past eight years.

Madras is the capital city of Tamil Nadu state where some 4,500 people died in Sunday's giant waves triggered by an earthquake off the Indonesian coast.

World number five Carlos Moya of Spain and Asia's flag-bearer Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand top the list of players taking part in the 400,000-dollar event from Jan. 3-9.

Moya, who defeated Paradorn in the final last season, returns to defend his crown after leading Spain to victory in the Davis Cup final against the United States earlier this month.

Among other top-100 players in the fray are Rainer Schuettler of Germany, Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden, Alex Calatrava of Spain, Lu Yen-Hsun of Taiwan, Dennis van Scheppingen of the Netherlands and Jan-Michael Gambill of the United States.

The organizers will host a charity auction on Sunday to raise funds for the tsunami victims.

Among the items to be auctioned are caps, racquets and shirts signed by leading players like Maria Sharapova, Venus Williams, Bjorn Borg and Chris Evert.

Clothing and caps autographed by golf stars Vijay Singh and Annika Sorensten will also be auctioned. *AFP*

THE AUSTRALIAN maxi Nicorette crosses the finish line in the early morning to take line honors in the Sydney-Hobart yacht race Dec. 29. The yacht won the 630 nautical mile bluewater classic in a time of two days and 16 hours, zero minutes and 44 seconds after rough weather forced out almost half the fleet. REUTERS

Australian maxi tops punishing yacht race

SYDNEY—Australian maxi Nicorette won line honors in a punishing Sydney-Hobart yacht race on Wednesday after rough weather forced out almost half the fleet, including heavily fancied super maxis Konica Minolta and Skandia.

Ludde Ingvall claimed his second Sydney-Hobart title when his boat coasted across the finish line under a white spinnaker just before dawn in gentle winds of eight knots, starkly different to the gale-force winds of the previous 36 hours.

Nicorette won in a time of two days 16 hours 00 minutes and 44 seconds for the annual 630-nautical mile bluewater classic.

"It was really hard. I'm very sorry for all the boats who didn't make it, it's not supposed to be this hard," Ingvall told reporters. "I feel more tired than I've ever felt in my life." Australian downwind flyer AAPT was second across the line more than six hours later. George Snow's seasoned Australian maxi Brindabella was third in a tick over three days.

Smaller British entrant Aera was in fifth place with experienced round-the-world sailor Jez Fanstone at the helm and well-placed to seal overall handicap honors on corrected time.

Finland-born Ingvall, a former winner of the Fastnet Race and former world maxi yacht champion, won the Sydney-Hobart in 2000 in his former boat of the same name.

His new A$5 million ($3.8 million), 27 meter (90 feet) vessel was launched just two weeks ago and survived a rough passage across Bass Strait between the Australian mainland and the southern island state of Tasmania.

Ingvall said his decision to hug the Tasmanian coastline had helped him avoid some of the bad weather and nurse his boat home after the withdrawal of Konica Minolta and Skandia.

Gale-force winds, high seas and unseasonably cold weather had buffeted the fleet since Monday, forcing out 53 boats from a starting fleet of 116.

Konica Minolta of New Zealand and 2003 race winner Skandia pulled out on Tuesday with serious structural damage after the pair had opened up a healthy lead. *Reuters*

Life's lesson from Tony: Sports should relate to human drama

By Percy D. Della, *Contributor*

SACRAMENTO—Writer and historian Henry Adams said: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where and when his influence stops."

Antonio Siddayao—sportswriter and editor nonpareil—has passed on to the Big Press Box in the Sky. But his sway on my career remains as strong today as it was when he became my boss eons ago.

Tony's journalistic mantra—write to express, not to impress—brought me two great media gigs in California—as wire service reporter and television news writer in Los Angeles.

From covering the news, I switched to public information for the State in 1983. As a department spokesman (a.k.a. public information officer) for the sixth largest economy in the world, I have outlasted four governors. A fifth—the current Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger—is the last big cheese I will work for before bailing out of the California civil service. I am looking forward to returning home for good in mid-2005.

All these years, the write-as-you-speak formula Mr. Siddayao taught has worked wonders. Sometimes it even earns plaudits not flak for a PIO from tough customers—some of them the crustiest of news reporters in the Golden State. English, whether Bostonian or Ilocano-accented, is their language. There is no need to impress.

I remembered my idol after reading the "pooled" news report for the next Philippine athletes of the year awards in January. The story said a chess whiz kid has won the Antonio Siddayao Award named for the best Filipino sportswriter of all time.

The Siddayao trophy is long overdue. It is more than a kind gesture from the Philippine Sportswriters Association Tony had served as president a number of times. He's long gone but the award rekindles a special teacher-student relationship many in Manila's sportswriting fraternity feel for Tony.

Tony became my sports editor at the Manila Times right before Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial rule on the islands. Ernie Gonzales, currently with the INQUIRER and Eddie Alinea who writes today for the Manila Bulletin already were on Tony's staff by the time I came aboard.

I went to the Times from a short stint with the Philippines Herald. Previously, I had been a television news writer and occasional reporter at ABS-CBN News under the wings of my first media mentor, Tony Seva (now retired after an illustrious broadcast career).

It was enrapturing to behold Mr. Siddayao at work. He pounded the typewriter's shift key repeatedly to snare the elusive muse. Once he did, words flowed like quicksilver for stories that radiated and warmed readers with their afterglow.

He was the master of the marginal notes—those nuggets of data about an athlete or a facet of a sport that humanized his stories and set them from the rest. He covered sports not so much for the outcome or the score. He wrote about basketball, athletics, golf, boxing, etc. to relate to the human drama of life.

As an editor, Tony held your copy up to the light in a subtle way. He expected you to stray from somersaulting syntax and become a miser with words. In his book, the simpler and shorter the sentence, the better.

He was a teacher who developed unbelievable rapport with his students.

Every day he taught about making sports relate to the reader. He taught with his writing. He taught from experience.

Mr. Siddayao found pure delight in well trained sports beat colleagues at the Times and in later years at the Philippine Daily Express and the Manila Standard.

So much so that Tony had a few qualms about leaving the sports pages to the staff for fear of a sub-par effort or editorial high jinks.

Peace

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE GAME between Detroit and Indiana on Christmas Day played second fiddle to reconciliation. Peace.

Why, because both teams figured in an ugly incident on Nov. 19 at The Palace in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

I was watching the game then at the cozy flat of Mike Magturo in Tustin City, Orange County, California, when, all of a sudden, it happened.

After Piston Ben Wallace had pushed Pacer Ron Artest extremely hard in retaliation for what Wallace believed was an intentional foul during a lay-up play, Artest managed to check his temper and retreated to cool his heels while lying down at the scorer's table.

The game was stopped with 45.9 seconds left, Indiana up, 97-82, when pushing and shoving among the players spilled into the stands after fans began throwing debris on the court aimed particularly at the players from Indiana.

It was when a spectator threw a soda at Artest, who got hit in the face, that hell broke loose.

Artest charged into the stands, hit a bespectacled spectator who he thought had thrown the glass of soda at him. When he was restrained from inflicting more harm on the hapless spectator, Artest vented his ire on another fan, who grabbed Artest from behind and started punching the Indiana forward.

Pacer Stephen Jackson soon joined Artest in the stands and also punched fans that came his way. Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal also joined the melee but not Detroit's Rasheed Wallace and Indiana's David Harrison and Reggie Miller, who were also in or near the stands but as pacifiers.

From the stands, Artest raced back to the court and hit another fan on the way to the dugout. Jackson did so, too.

After several minutes of fighting between players and fans, the Pacers were pelted with beer, ice and popcorn as they made their way to the locker room, covering their heads as they were hustled through the runway.

"It's the ugliest thing I've seen as a coach or player," said Pistons coach Larry Brown.

The next morning, as I was buying the Los Angeles Times, the owner of the convenience store, seeing me raced to the Sports Section, said, "So, you wanna know the real story about last night's riot in the NBA, huh?"

A fellow customer said, "Boy, you bet, one of the fans that got punched last night will end up like a lotto winner from lawsuits that will arise from the fracas."

That morning, NBA Commissioner David Stern banned Artest the rest of the season on top of a fine close to $5 million. O'Neal received a suspension that went beyond Christmas Day, but was lifted in time for the Dec. 25 rematch between Indiana and Detroit.

Detroit won the return bout, 98-93, held at Conseco Field in Indiana despite O'Neal's presence.

Although the Pistons were booed at times, especially when Ben Wallace had the ball, no incident marred the encounter.

"We played basketball and that was it," said Chauncy Billups of Detroit. "That incident is behind us now. It's simply time to move on."

Said one placard carried by a fan that day at Conseco Field, "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men."

Indeed, peace was the ultimate winner that day not only in the NBA but also in all of sportslandia.

Marquez wants $1.5M to fight Pacquiao

PACQUIAO

Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

THE MANAGER of WBA and IBF featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez has threatened to pull out of talks regarding the Feb. 26 megafight if and when his ward is not given a fair share of the purses.

Ignacio Beristain, the man credited for Marquez's continued rise to superstardom, has warned that the much anticipated rematch will never materialize "unless Top Rank starts to get a lot more realistic about the purse money on offer," said a report by James Blears over at Boxingscene.

Beristain made these statements during a rigorous workout by Juan Manuel at the Gilberto Roman Gym in Mexico City. Reportedly, Marquez has been training since November and even kept a spartan lifestyle during Christmas Day, training and working out at the gym while people enjoyed the festivities.

"There are a lot of difficulties, not just a few in the negotiations for Juan Manuel's purse," said Beristain. "Bob Arum's son (Todd Du Boef) and Fernando Beltran are proving a bit difficult. I hope that by mid January, we should have a deal concluded but if not I don't think there's going to be a fight."

The manager explained that the contentious point lies not with Du Boef who he has yet to meet, but Fernando Beltran who he claims is offering "a ridiculous amount. "Half as much as my fighter wants," said Beristain. "We want more because Juan Manuel is the champion. I consider this to be an abuse. We want money not peanuts."

"We want a minimum of 1.5 million dollars, and they're offering about half of that," Beristain cited, when asked what was being put on the table.

"We want this fight to go ahead. Juan has been working exceptionally hard in the preparation. And we want to show the fans Juan's class as a fighter, in order to gain access to better paydays."

Beristain even went as far as threatening to pull themselves out of their promotional agreement with Beltran and Top Rank, should their demands were not met by the promoters of the Feb. 26 bout.

YEARENDER

Aces, dubs mark Philippine golf

By Musong R. Castillo

TOWERING above all else and sometimes down so close to the ground, Philippine golf had plenty of both for the year about to end.

From Jennifer Rosales finally breaking through in the LPGA to Angelo Que winning for the first time in the Asian Tour, RP golf had a lot to celebrate in the international professional scene.

It also had more than its deserved share of disappointments, most notable was the disastrous, humiliating tumble in an event it used to dominate with ease in the past—the Putra Cup.

The old names held sway for another year, with Juvic Pagunsan remaining to be the country's top amateur gun and Tommy Manotoc breaking new ground as the Philippines was represented for the first time in the prestigious British Senior Amateur.

There were also new ones that broke to national prominence, like AR Ramos, the Little People's champion, Michael Bibat and Frances Bondad, the RP Ladies Amateur champ.

An island-hopping, 108-hole tournament known as the Super Golf Tour was held early in the year and a new caddies championship was launched, assuring that the coming year will be busier than the past.

The squabble in the NGAP election was a low point for the sport during the year, like the denial of visa applications of the men's World Amateur squad by the US Embassy.

The non-inclusion of Bondad to the ladies' team also caused a stir, before Jayvee Agojo saved Philippine pride in Puerto Rico with a final round magic no one in the elite field came close to touching.

Agojo's four-under 68 also catapulted the Philippines to a share of 18th place, assuring the country of a stint in The Spirit tournament in Houston, Texas, next year where only the top 20 teams in the world are qualified.

Manotoc, who also won the Asia Pacific Seniors in Singapore, had bargained for several seats in the NGAP board in an effort to truly unite the golfing world.

Benny Gopez earned a mandate as the new NGAP president as public golf clubs backed his candidacy.

Michael Edwards, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, won the DHL 88th Philippine Open at the Riviera in Cavite, putting a fitting end to a tournament that needed a change of venue at the last minute after the Mimosa was deemed unfit to host.

Members of the Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines also fought it out, with a majority of its nine-man board headed by treasurer Antonio Arevalo voting to oust president Romulo Negrido and two others in a meeting last July.

Their differences remain unresolved.

Jun Bernis is Bondad's counterpart as the country's amateur champion. He also won the DHL Amateur Open.

ROSALES: Blossoming career

AFP

Cassius Casas ruled the Super Tour, a tournament that played in Villamor, Club Malarayat in Batangas, Fairways and Blue Water in Boracay, Marapara in Bacolod, Del Monte in Bukidnon and the Pueblo De Oro in Cagayan de Oro.

It was an eight-day, P5 million event conceptualized and carried out by PR man Rommel Ynion which is poised to become a regular event like the rich The Country Club Invitational won by Antonio Lascuna.

The Putra Cup stands as the biggest letdown of the year as the Philippine side that went to Indonesia without Pagunsan crashed and burned, finishing fourth behind Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar.

Pagunsan missed the Putra Cup after playing in the US Amateurs at Winged Foot in New York and in his place stepped up Bibat, who finished sixth in the Putra Cup before winning the Singapore Amateur against a talented field.

Buried in all the action were Arevalo and Manotoc quietly working on a bigger caddies tournament, doing so after the family of the late Robert Cheng opted not to continue with the Uratex tilt.

Arevalo and Manotoc were later on joined by Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos and champion horse owner and breeder Hermie Esguerra in coming up with the National Caddies Open that offers prizes unlike any other in the world.

Pagunsan, despite missing the halfway cut in New York, still had a lot of highlights for the year, shooting five-under in three rounds of the shortened World Amateurs to finish tied for fifth in the individual race.

A crack squad captained by Villamor general manager and NGAP director Roberto Sabularse, meanwhile, went on to win the team title in the Thailand Amateur Open. Pagunsan also hung on to clinch the individual title for a sweet RP sweep.

Que held off no less than the celebrated Thongchai Jaydee for the first Carlsberg Masters Vietnam, winning more than US$32,000 that allowed him to keep his Asian Tour card and participate in as many events as he wishes next year.

All told, golf had a lot to smile and frown about, though the highs will be very hard to forget, especially after seeing Rosales break down on worldwide television for winning the Chick Fil-A Charity.

The comely 26-year-old, playing several flights ahead of the overnight leaders, was a nervous wreck while awaiting the conclusion of the rounds of the big guns.

When it was finally over, Rosales got the monkey off her back and entered the list of the world's elite. Her accomplishment earned her the nod of the Philippine Sportswriters Association as its Sportwoman of the Year.

In this country where golf continues to enjoy a boom, the hero—or the goat—will always share equal billing.

SPORTSWATCH

IM Sanchez shares second place

AFTER TAKING an early draw, International Master Joseph Sanchez scored three consecutive wins to share second place yesterday in the 20th International Nice Open at the Le Grand Hotel Aston in Nice, France. Sanchez (ELO 2430), a former member of the Philippine Navy Chess Team, settled for a draw with local bet Gerard Drogou in the opening round. But he later subdued Jean-Marc Gudenian, Michel Graille and Mickael Diaz of France for a 3.5-point score. Sanchez, who also coaches GM-elect Mark Paragua, tied with GM Hicham Hamdouchi (ELO 2575) of France, GM Nenad Sulava (ELO 2477) of Croatia, FM Nabil Saleh (ELO 2284) of UAE, IM Sebastien Maze (ELO 2464), Gerard Drogou (ELO 2094) and Fabien Libiszewski (ELO 2419) of France. Top seed GM Vladimir Ephisin (ELO 2599) of Russia beat IM Aurelien Dunis (ELO 2461) of France to score his fourth straight win in this Fide tournament which attracted 186 woodpushers from the European Circuit. Meanwhile, lone Filipino entry IM Jayson Gonzales started his bid in the 80th Hastings International Chess Congress at the Horntye Park in Hastings, England. The 33-year-old Gonzales recently scored 6.0 points in nine games, tying GMs Alex Stripunsky and John Fedorowicz of the US for second place in the Edward Lasker Memorial chess tournament at the Marshall Chess Club in Manhattan, New York. Gonzales missed his second GM norm after his eight and penultimate round match against Isareli GM Leonid Yudasin finished with a draw. *Marlon Bernardino*

Buncio lands 4th in Yamaha Asean Cup

MAICO Buncio of Team Yamaha Racing-Philippines bagged fourth place in the second Yamaha Asean Cup held in Shah Alam, Malaysia, recently. The 16-year-old high school student of OB Montessori (Sta. Ana) was the highest finisher among first-time participants. Buncio held his own during the two-part race to finish 16th overall out of 25 novice participants who used identically prepared Crypton Z Yamaha underbone motorcycles with minimum modifications for racing use and safety. The team also received the best country motorcycle design award and the special sportsmanship award. "I learned a lot after riding and racing with them and how to behave in a top-level competition," said Buncio, who is also supported by Norkis-Yamaha, Shell Advance, Hirano Racing, YRS, Bridgestone Tires and Denso Plugs.

Andrada Cup deadline tomorrow

REGISTRATION for the 16th Andrada Cup age-group tennis championships, a Group 2 tournament, will end tomorrow, Friday, at noon. Entries for the event, slated Jan. 3 to 9 at the Ynares Socio-Cultural Sports Center in Pasig City, are accepted at the Philippine Tennis Association (Philta) office at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and at the Asian Sports Management Inc. (Asmi) office at the Ynares Center. Events on tap are the boys' and girls' 18 years and under, 16 and under, 14 and under and 12 and under and unisex 10 years and under singles. Registration fee is P200 per event and the draw will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Patrimonio, Mamawal gain semis

CLARISSE Patrimonio blanked Marinel Ferry, 6-0, 6-0, and Chynna Mamawal ousted JV Custodio, 6-3, 6-1, to barge into the semifinals of the girls' 12-under division yesterday in the 2004 MILO Junior Tennis Cup at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City. Patrimonio takes on Joan Opulencia, a 6-0, 6-0 victor past Krizelle Sampaton; while Mamawal meets Regina Santiago in the year-ender Milo netfest organized by CTW and supported by adidas. Angelo Patrimonio posted a 6-0, 6-1 win over Erwin Arevalo to advance in the boys' 18-under bracket with Jose Opulencia, who triumphed 6-2, 6-2 past Niko Katigbak and Vincent Atienza, a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 victor over Carlos Espedido.

Pamigay Premyo stakes P1-M prize

A GUARANTEED prize of P1 million is at stake at the Pamigay Premyo 5-Cock Derby on Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29 at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The event will be hosted by former Mayor Nene Aguilar and sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Entry fee during the elimination rounds (2-cock) on Jan. 8, 15 and 22 is P2,200 and an additional P6,600 during the championship round on Jan. 29. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said that regardless of the actual number of entries, the guaranteed prize will be given to the winners as follows: champion, P700,000; runner-up, P100,000; any three points, P150,000; handler, P30,000 and gaffer, P20,000. Reservation of cockhouses is on. Call 873-1040, 874-3910 and 0920-5609404.

Las Piñas hosts 3-cock derby

UPCOMING cockers and breeders of Metro Manila will see action in another tough 3-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Featuring 50 fights, the cockfest is sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. In last week's 3-cock event, the Princess entry of Jay-ar and Toto Lacson of Makati bagged the solo championship after posting three victories. Tonight's host is Eddie Alejandro of Parañaque. Cash prize at stake is P300,00 for a P5,500 entry fee. Meanwhile, the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby is set on Jan. 10 and 12. Founded by Patrick Antonio, GCAP is now bigger and stronger with 35 members. Recently, Rep. Rudy Albano, a prominent member of the National Cockers Association, was elected as GCAP's new president; Mayor Nene Aguilar, chair; Tony Lasala, treasurer; and directors Lito Orillaza, Gerry Ramos, Pol Estrellado, Benjie Lim, Jenjen Arayata, William Go and Ronnie Lacsina.

Ilusorio golf tourney tees off today

THE 5TH Nanoy Ilusorio Cup Invitational Golf tournament tees off today at the Baguio Country Club layout.

The 18-hole event has four tournament classifications: men's (A, B, C, D); ladies (A, B, C); dependents (A, B, C); and seniors (A and B).

The Medal play with handicap scoring format will be applied in the men's, ladies and seniors, while the System 36 will be put to use in the guest division. The player who shall submit the lowest gross score will be declared this year's club champion.

The tournament is supported by Smart Communications Phils., Werdenburg International Corp., Prudential Guarantee, Wolfgang Harle Philippines and Star Force Security and Allied Services Inc.

The event was conceived by the late chair for life and president emeritus of the club, lawyer Potenciano Ilusorio. He was the second Filipino BCC president.

Dungca, Lubao 2 dominate Ka Eliong meet

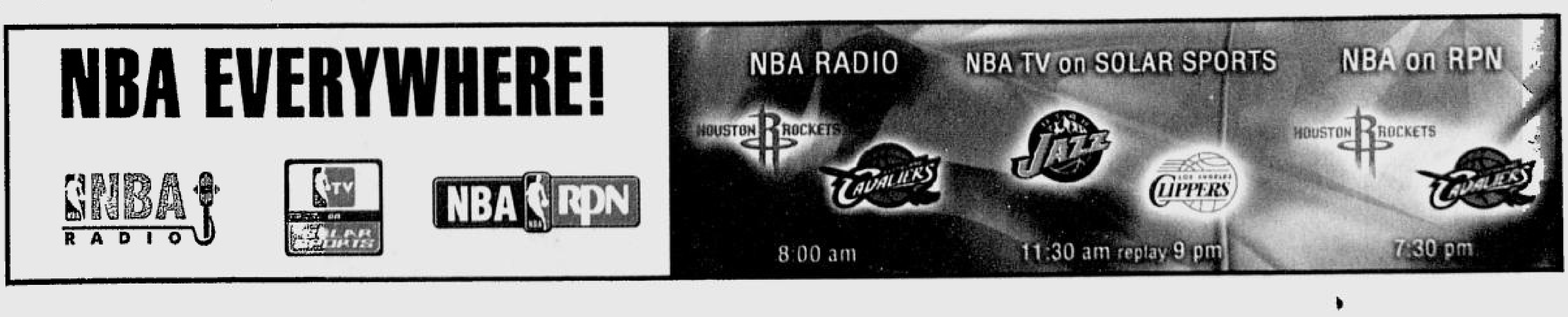
OMAR Dungca emerged the overall individual champion while powering Lubao 2 to the team championship in the third "Ka Eliong" memorial and inter-town golf tournament at the Royal Northwoods Golf Club in San Rafael, Bulacan, recently.

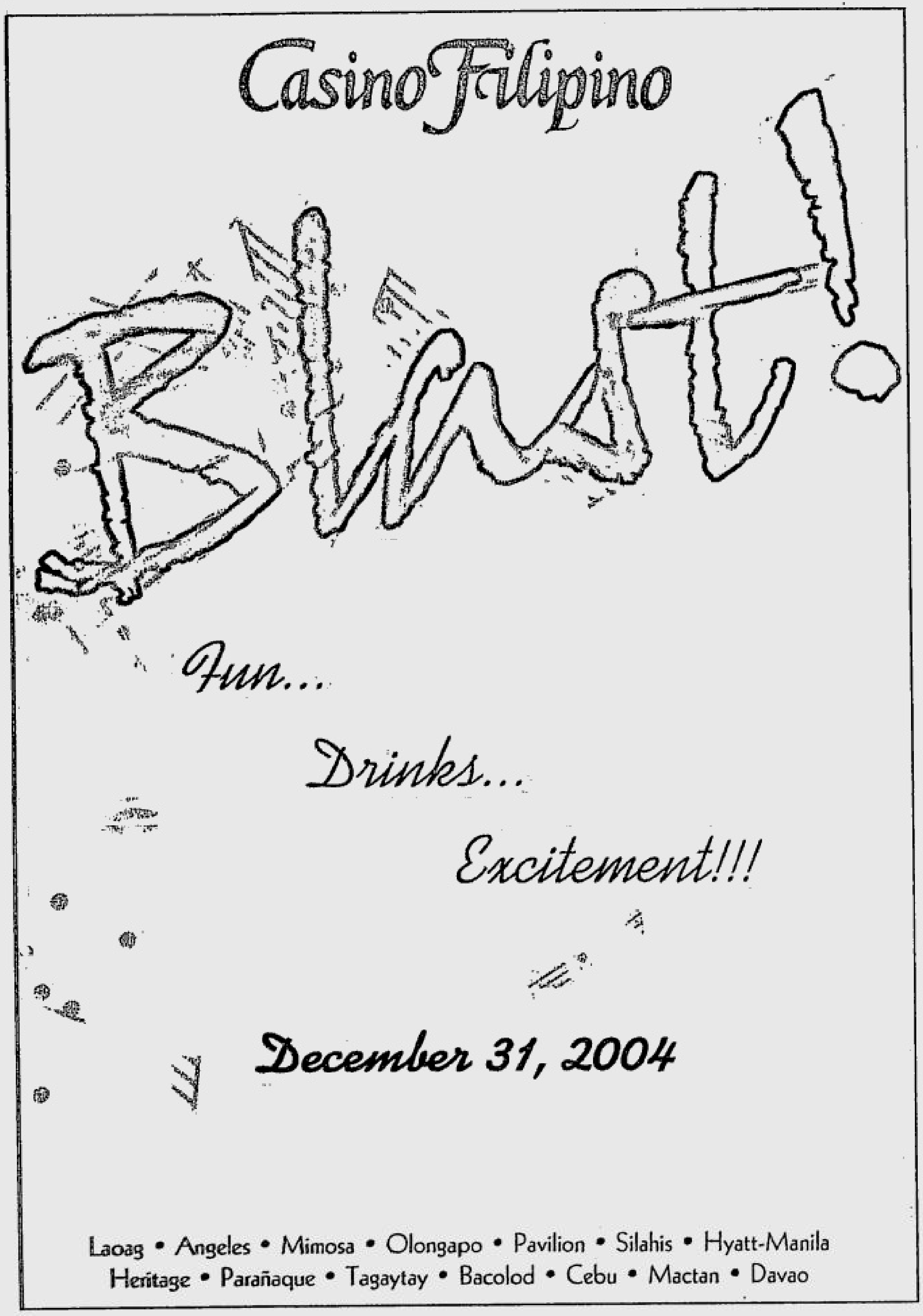
With Dungca at the helm, Lubao 2 scored 225 points to capture the overall team title in the two-day event held to commemorate the memory of the late Cornelio Pancho, better known as "Ka Eliong" and the prime mover of the Royal Northwoods Golf Club.

Other members of Lubao 2 were Raymond Sangil, C. Delos Santos and Ferdie Auzo.

Meycauayan 2, composed of Nanding Garcia, Chino Raymundo, Rodel Mangulabnan and Kim Chang Hoi, pooled 208 points to beat Isabela I and rule the Class A division of the tournament which drew 160 participants from different municipalities around the country.

Isabela I, led by August Cruz, Dennis Nicomedes, Bong Igaya and Michael Bibat, scored 188 points.




Casino Filipino
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Magic-comedy show needs more spectacular tricks

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Sunday evening, we caught Channel 7's relatively new show, "Naks!," being fielded opposite Channel 2's "Rated K." This suggested that GMA-7 felt that the magic-comedy show could provide viewers with a welcome viewing alternative to ABS-CBN's magazine program.

We don't know about that, but we *can* discuss the Channel 7 show *per se*. It comes across as a local version of the "street magic" shows on US TV, with an extra serving of comedy thrown in.

The show stages magic tricks in different locations. Since most of its resident magicians aren't well-known, they can easily perform their tricks without blowing their cover.

As a result, the people they interact with react in a spontaneous way, and this adds to the show's sense of fun.

On the other hand, the program is less than the viewing treat it should be because the tricks its magicians play are relatively simple and unspectacular.

Another limitation is its resident performers' excessively hyper behavior.

It's meant to be funny, but it's mostly just distracting.

The show would be more viewable if its hosts weren't left to their own comic devices, and were helped by funnier and more inventive scripting.

Its magicians' tricks could also be upgraded, so that viewers would get really surprised and fascinated.

Then, we would be able to exclaim, "Naks!" With the requisite enthusiasm and genuine excitement.

Movies on TV

ON HBO today at 1:55 p.m., "Soapdish." Dec. 31 at 6:30 a.m., "My House in Umbria." 1:05 p.m., "Minority Report." 3:30 p.m., "Doc Hollywood." 9 p.m., "The Matrix Reloaded." 11:15 p.m., "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets."

On Cinemax today at 12:30 p.m., "American Crime." 2 p.m., "Jason and the Argonauts." 6:45 p.m., "Black Hawk Down." Dec. 31 at 9 a.m., "A Few Good Men." 11:15 p.m., "To Sir With Love." 10:45 p.m., "Ghost of Mississippi."

New Year special

ON Dec. 31 at 9 p.m., welcome the new year with South Border in the special year-ender telecast of "Sing Galing ni Pops" on ABC-5. Local TV's original videoke game show is hosted by Pops Fernandez.

Piano concert

LARS Roos, one of Sweden's best concert pianists, will perform at the Mandarin Oriental Manila at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 3, 2005.

After his education in piano and music theory at Sweden's Royal Academy of Music, Roos took graduate studies with the Julliard School of Music's **Sascha Gorodnitzski**, and the legendary virtuoso **Jorge Bolet**. He then performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and was the accompanist of world-famous soprano **Birgit Nilsson** for 11 years.

Roos also worked with the music world's top conductors. In Scandinavia, he's very popular due to his numerous radio concerts and more than 150 live television performances.

'Easy English' seminar

CORBAN Tutorial Center will hold a new "Easy English" seminar on Jan. 8, 9, 15 and 16, 2005, from 2 to 5 p.m. The course runs for 30 minutes.

Corban also conducts corporate seminars and IELTS reviews and student tutorials. Call 842-6665. The center is at the ground floor of the MB Aguirre Bldg., President's Avenue corner Elizalde Street, BF Parañaque.

'Kung Fu Hustle'

WRITTEN, directed and starred in by Hong Kong superstar **Stephen Chow**, "Kung Fu Hustle" tells the story of a hapless wannabe gangster who aspires to become member of the notorious Axe Gang.

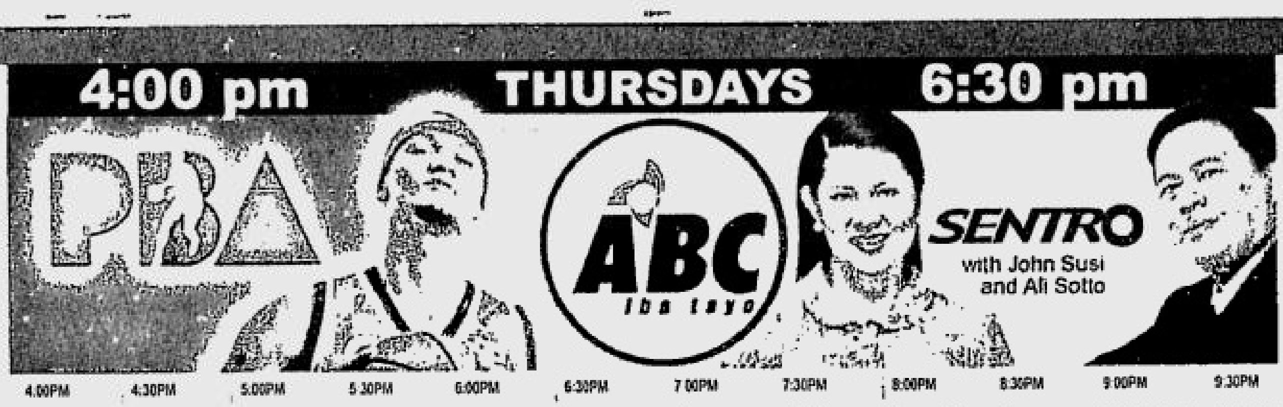
The ruthless mob is focused on gaining control of the only area in its territory that has remained out of reach—a housing project whose residents are strangely well-versed in the art of kung fu.

Chow says his film was inspired by the success enjoyed by "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "House of Flying Daggers," two films that have taken the martial arts to a whole new level of artistic inspiration.

But Chow updates the tradition to contemporary relevance, and adds his strongest signature suit: At the center of his new film's story is a likable, scruffy underdog who has to fight powerful forces.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Thursday December 30, 2004



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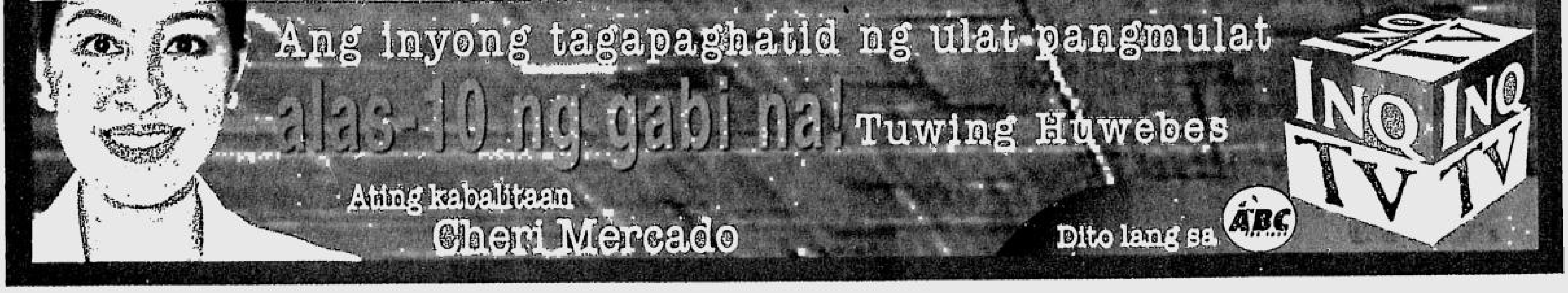
Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers in Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider	Dong Puno
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision		APEC Primer 3		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Muscon Cup 2003				Dial M	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA					Sentro	PBA					Big News	Inq TV		Fearless Fighting	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever in My Heart (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
IBC 13		Japan Video Topic		EZ Shop		IBC Express Balita		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Retro TV		Travel	Japan Video Topic		Entrepinoy	Good Take	IBC News Tonite		
Solar		WWE Smackdown				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxstart	Dungeons And Dragons	Babylon V		Thunder Box		JAG		The Skulls			
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	What I Like About You	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	JKX	Ed		Girls Behaving Badly	Simple Life 2	Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Film Wheel
Cinema One		Cool Dudes				Bagong Buwan				Asin At Paminta		Shake, Rattle & Roll 4				Mano Po 2			
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup		Barkada Nights				News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN		Bloodfist III				The Amazing Race		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	7 Days		30 Seconds To Fame	30 Seconds To Fame	The 4400		The Fan			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Smallville		The Simple Life/ The Chronicle: News From The Edge		For Love Or Money/ My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance		Friends	Smallville
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Innovation		Frontiers Of Construction		Bodies Of The Dead		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Innovation	Frontiers Of Construction		
Solar Sports		IBF Hongkong Open '04 MS/MxD Finals			Sounds of the Finals			FIVB Beach Tour Rio de Janeiro WF			WTA Volvo Open Finals		NBA TV Daily	NBA Utah vs. L.A. Clippers					NBA Action
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens Of	The Fix!	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	Love Chain	You're Invited	Good Finds	Clean House		Breathing Room	Genuine Article	Planet Parent	Sara's Secrets
HBO			Freedom Fighter				Miss Lettie And Me			Alive (6:55 PM)				The Tuxedo			Daddy Day Care (10:40PM)		
Star Movies				Long Time Dead			Our Lips Are Sealed			The Grinch (7:15 PM)				Solaris			In Hell (10:40PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	TBA					Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show	Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN	World Pool League '04 Warsaw, Poland		2004 Acc/Big 10 Chall. Virginia vs Northwestern				2004-05 Big 10 Conf. Basketball- Missouri vs Illinois				Sportscenter Taiwan	World Pool League '04 Warsaw, Poland Premier Snooker League '04 Crosby Durham,UK				Sportscenter Taiwan			
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-fabulous Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			Scenes Of The Crime (3:45 PM)			Tough Luck (5:15 PM)			Black Hawk Down (6:45 PM)					Alien Hunter			Lethal Tender		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	King Solomon's Mines				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Strong Medicine		Back When We Were Grown Ups			Sue Thomas: FB Eye		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Monster Garage		Ultimate Guide		Wild Discovery		Best Of Discovery			
MTV Philippines		MTV Asia Hitlist		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	Moto Love Music Angel Baby	MTV U-Break	MTV Jams	MTV Jammed	TRL		Globally Dismissed	Pimp My Ride	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus		The Int'l Highlights		Porsche rnd 1&2	Golf Academy 2002	Big 12 College Nebraska at Oklahoma Nat'l					Raceworld		Superbowl III Jets vs. Colts			WTA Finals Tennis Philadelphia			
EWTN	A Christian Pilgrimage To Jordan	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Suffering Church	Angel Force	Children's Rosary	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	The Spirit Of Catholic Leadership	Saints: A Closer Look	EWTN Gallery	EWTN Live With Father Mitch Pacwa		Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Council Of Faith	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	Holy Spirit In The Church	The Journey Home	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.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KAPUSO SAYAWAN COUNTDOWN

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7:00 pm onwards

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TELECAST at 11:00 pm

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GMA

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Last 4 days of 'Disney'

"DISNEY ON ICE presents Princess Classics."

YOU only have until Jan. 3, 2005 to catch the latest ice spectacle to hit Manila, "Disney on Ice presents Princess Classics" at the Araneta Coliseum.

The enchanting show features Disney's seven princesses—Cinderella, Jasmine, Ariel, Sleeping Beauty, Belle, Mulan and Snow White—together in a live production for the first time.

An international troupe of more than 40 award-winning figure skaters perform on the ice under the helm of world-renowned choreographers Tom Dickson, named Choreographer of the Year by the Professional Skaters Association and the US Professional Figure Skating Association in 2002, and his wife Catarina Lindgren, a former Olympian.

For this 23rd production of Disney on Ice, Dickson and Lindgren incorporate synchronized skating in the high-impact choreography.

Adding to the dazzling display are the costumes by award-winning Broadway designer Gregg Barnes.

"Disney on Ice presents Princess Classics" will have performances today and on Jan. 1, 2, and 3.

Tickets are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets and at the Araneta box office.

"Disney on Ice presents Princess Classics" is also presented by Gateway Mall and Globe Gizmo Prepaid.

For ticket inquiries, call 911-5555. For group sales, call 911-3101 local 8293.

Video pirates feast on FPJ death

From page A26

week as a messenger for a film outfit, his first job, in the early 1950s.

For three FPJ VCDs, one needs to pay only P50, at a discount of P4.

But counterfeit copies of foreign and other local movies are priced P20-25 per disc.

Best-sellers

The best-selling pirated FPJ films include, among others, "Perlas ng Silangan," one of the initial offerings of Poe's very own FPJ Productions in the 1960s and co-starring the actor's widow, Susan Roces; "Kahit Konting Pagtingin" with Sharon Cuneta, "Hagedorn" where he played the equally legendary mayor of Puerto Princesa, "Daniel Bartolo ng Sapang Bato," "Isang Bala Ka Lang Part 2," "Eseng ng Tondo," "Ang Probinsyano," "Alamat ng Lawin," "Isusumbong Kita sa Tatay Ko," "Ang Dalubhasa," "Walang Matigas na Tinapay sa Mainit na Kape," "'Di pa Tapos ang Laban," "Batang Quiapo," "Magnum 357," and the hugely popular Panday series, a creation of *komiks* writer-turned-director Carlo J. Caparas.

FERNANDO POE, JR.
ESENG NG TONDO

Cheap FPJ VCDs can also be easily obtained at shopping centers and ambulant stores in Divisoria and Sta. Cruz in Manila, Greenhills in San Juan, Pasong Tamo and Guadalupe in Makati City, Baclaran in Parañaque City, Cubao, Tandang Sora and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, Monumento and Rizal Avenue Extension in Caloocan City, and the Crossing-Edsa area in Mandaluyong City.

Video pirates, however, have apparently failed to reproduce in the VCD format other FPJ classics like "Anak ng Palaris" (1955), the actor's film debut as lead star; "Lo Waist Gang" (1956); "Sigaw ng Digmaan" (1963); "Mga Alabok ng Lupa" which won for him his first acting award in 1967; "Daniel Barrion," "Katarungan," "Walls of Hell," and "Apollo Robles."

The action king's career as actor, writer, cinematographer and producer spanned five decades, resulting in more than 250 movies.

"Business has been good since FPJ's death [due to a 'brain attack'] two weeks ago)," a stallholder at the infamous Quiapo center told the INQUIRER.

Actually, it had been business as usual there even before the movie legend's sudden death and repeated raids conducted by agents of the Optical Media Board (formerly Videogram Regulatory Board).

Target areas

Actor and OMB Chair Edu Manzano had earlier told the INQUIRER that the days of the country's most notorious video pirates, including those operating at the Quiapo center, were numbered.

The notorious trade center tops the OMB's list of "target areas," Manzano also said.

"They have left us with no choice," said Manzano, former president of the Actors' Guild. The OMB was "mandated by law [Republic Act 9239, otherwise known as the Optical Media Act of 2003] to go after those pirates and put a stop to their illegal activities."

But repeated raids by government agents and their military and police backups during the past six years have failed to deter the Quiapo center's 100-or-so stalls and neighboring shops from engaging in the illegal trade.

Between 2002 and mid-2004, more than 8 million pirated DVDs, VCDs and music CDs were hauled during OMB raids on fake video stores in Quiapo alone.

The Philippines is included on the 2004 "priority watch list" of the International Intellectual Property Alliance, a Washington-based intellectual property rights watchdog.

Also on the list are 16 other nations: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Poland, Russian Federation, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

RP's suppliers

Surprisingly, Malaysia and Hong Kong, reportedly among the Philippines' top suppliers of fake optical media products, were not on the IIPA priority watch list.

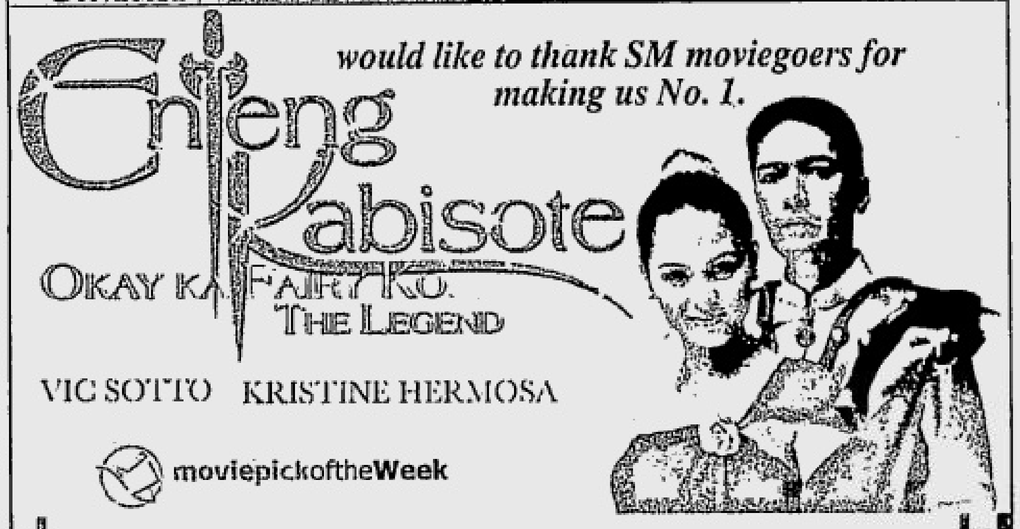
Manzano had told media that 85 percent of all counterfeit DVDs in the Philippines come from Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

"The ones from Malaysia are of better quality, but those from Indonesia and China are cheaper, especially the DVDs from Manado (Indonesia) which come in through the Davao international airport," said Manzano. "And it's just an hour and 15 minutes away."

He said DVD and VCD replicating plants also exist in the country, but the OMB is more concerned about the "mom-and-pop operations" that secretly conduct their illegal trade in residences or even schools.

"You just buy five or 10 CD burners which you can put in your bedroom or bathroom and they can run for 24 hours," Manzano noted. "Those operations are harder to nab than the ones that operate replicating plants because the investments [of the former] are bigger."

SM CINEMA movietime



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PANAGHOY SA SUBA

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2 LASTIKMAN
3 SIGAW
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5 MANO PO 3
6 ENTENG KABISOTE

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1 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
2 LASTIKMAN
3 MANO PO 3
4 ENTENG KABISOTE

sm city baguio
1 MANO PO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

sm city bacoor
1 AISHITE IMASU 1941
2 SIGAW
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 LASTIKMAN
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
7 MANO PO 3
8 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

sm city batangas
1 MANO PO 3
2 LASTIKMAN
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

sm city dasmariñas
1 SIGAW
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 MANO PO 3

sm city lucena
1 MANO PO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 MANO PO 3
2 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
3 LASTIKMAN
4 AISHITE IMASU 1941
5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
6 SIGAW
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

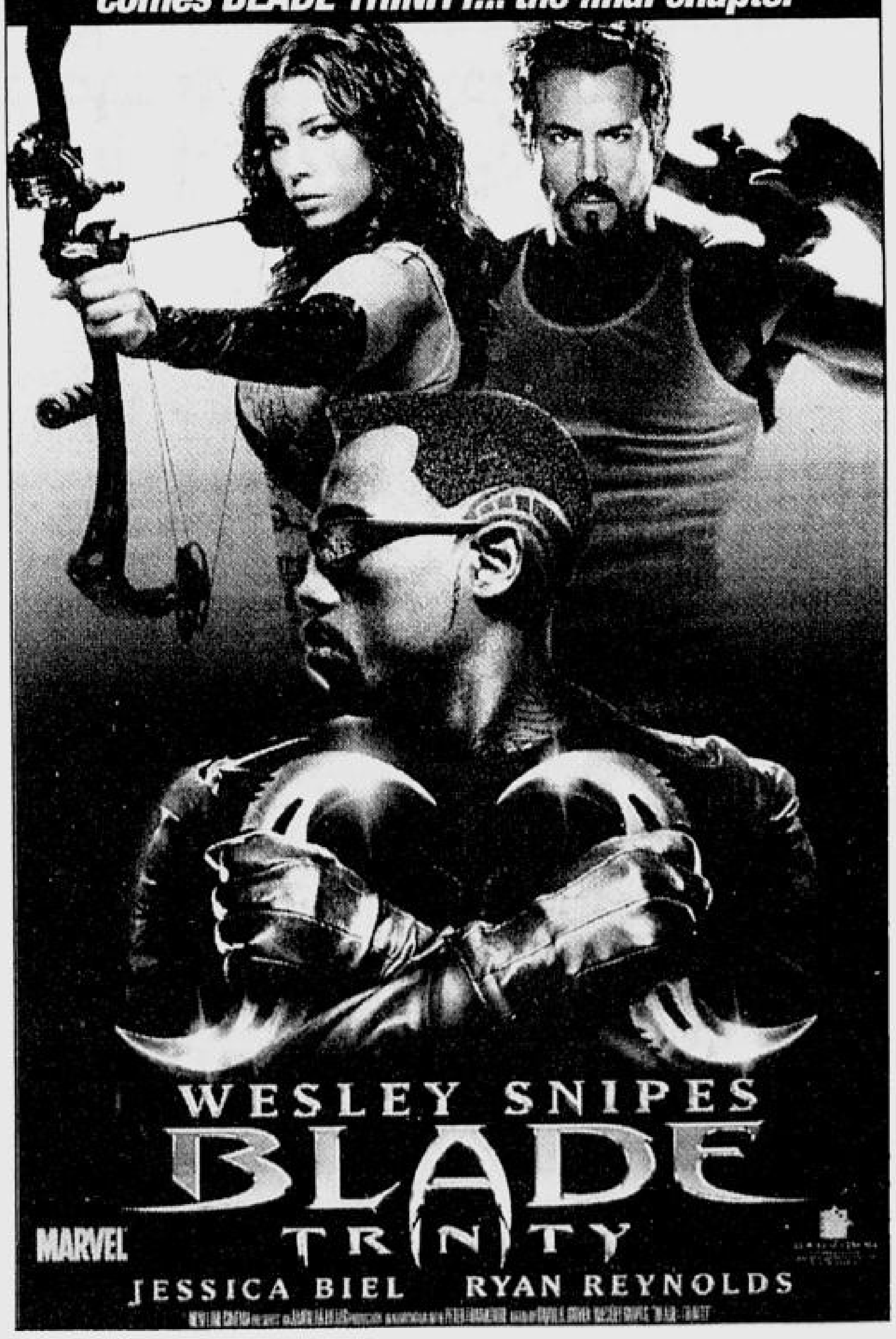
sm city iloilo
1 AISHITE IMASU 1941
2 RESERVED
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 LASTIKMAN
6 MANO PO 3
7 RESERVED
8 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city davao
1 MANO PO 3
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 LASTIKMAN
5 AISHITE IMASU 1941
6 SIGAW

sm city cagayan de oro
1 MANO PO 3
2 LASTIKMAN
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

Movies are subject to change without prior notice • For complete movie schedule, visit www.smcinema.com

OPENS JANUARY 6
THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST SUPERHERO IS BACK!
From MARVEL, the creators of SPIDERMAN comes BLADE TRINITY... the final chapter



WESLEY SNIPES
BLADE TRINITY
MARVEL
JESSICA BIEL RYAN REYNOLDS

Breaking up, staying together in 2004

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

WHAT a year it has been!

There were thorns along the way but there were also roses. You can't have one without the other. Somehow life has a way of balancing things out.

As we welcome the new year, may we be able to weed out the bad stuff and have more time to smell the flowers.

Here are some quotable quotes from some of the celebrities who shared their innermost thoughts with Dollywood the past year.

Renee Zelwegger. "In real life I would go for an amalgamation of the better qualities of **Daniel Cleaver** [played by **Hugh Grant**] and **Mark Darcy** [**Colin Firth**] as portrayed in 'Bridget Jones.' I am not that simple, though I can also be a homebody when I want to."

Martin Nievera. "I have nothing to do with their relationship but, believe it or not Brad [Turvey] and I are friends. He even called me the other day to clarify all the rumors. Some people are obviously trying to make us fight but sorry it won't work with me. Of course I will always be concerned for Pops [Fernandez] because she's the mother of my kids but I won't go to the extent of badmouthing or threatening whoever she is or was involved with."

Angelu de Leon. "I don't oblige [the fathers of my kids] to give support. I can't put a price tag on my kids. They know that they are welcome to visit and borrow our daughters anytime but I'm not begging them to. I'm working hard for the love of my kids. *'Di ko lang alam* if my two girls know na living thing *ang mga* daddy *nila kasi* they don't get to touch them."

Tin-tin Bersola. "Julius [Babao] and I meet people in restaurants and malls, and they all express their joy for us. There was even a kind woman who cried when she saw us. She said she has been praying for us to have a baby and now she is so happy that she saw me in person, already preggy. I can't forget what she said, *'Puwede palang maging kapamilya talaga ang napapanood mo lang sa telebisyon.'* Isn't that touching? This early, dear Baby Babao is also a part of our followers' lives. And we're only too glad to share this joy with them"

Arnel Ignacio. (On his messy separation from his wife Franny): "*Kahit bading ako, nagpapaka-*gentleman *ako kaya ayoko sagutin ang mga* accusations *niya sa akin.*"

Ai Ai de las Alas: "It's my ultimate dream to walk down the aisle with the right person. *Gusto ko* three costume changes *'pag* finally *makasuot ako ng traje de boda.*"

Cesar Montano. (On witnessing wife Sunshine Cruz's delivery of their second baby) "I have directed movies but looking through the lens while Sam was coming is a scene like no other. I could feel Shine's pain and at the same time I was nervous but happy. It's an inexplicable feeling."

Miriam Quiambao. (On talk that her Italian hubby is not really wealthy) "That cheap talk is so ridiculous. In the first place I didn't marry him for money. He doesn't have to flaunt anything at all. Now I can say that with foreigners you can be more yourself. My husband lets me be. No offense meant to Pinoys. But maybe because of our culture, mothers tend to pamper their sons, that's why usually Pinoys are spoiled."

Melanie Marquez. "The biggest trial for me was when my son Manuelito was declared dead when he was 1 year and 3 months old. He was really black and blue already. I never stopped praying. I begged the Lord to give back my son's life and I promised Him that I would leave the man I love [Sen. Lito Lapid, Manuelito's father].

"It was also during that time when I found out that Lito was married so my world was really a mess and I had so much hatred in my heart then. The Lord brought my son back to life after two hours. That's why he's called 'The Miracle Boy.' That experience changed me completely. I have become a better person after that.

"I live by the Biblical verse 'Love one another.' For me if there's love, everything else comes easy."

For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com.

ZELWEGGER

Countdown at Sta. Lucia

JOIN Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall as it welcomes 2005 with a bang.

Today, visit the biggest mall in eastern Metro Manila and watch mascots as they parade around the mall starting at 4 p.m.

At 7 p.m., jam and jive to the music of Luke Mejares, Kitchie Nadal and Figure 8 as they perform live at the mall's open car park. Highlighting the festivities is the colorful fireworks display at 11 .m.

This is Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall's way of thanking patrons for another good year of shopping, dining and entertainment.

The New Year Countdown is sponsored by Ganzklar, Bizaare, Me' Accessories, Micro J, Hardware Exchange, Going Straight Salon, Mongkok, I Love Sushi, Lotsaf Pizza, Texas Chicken, Jollibee, McDonald's and My Little Playroom.

Stars in Marikina celebration tonight

SHOW TIME

FUN, culture and memories combine as the city government of Marikina holds its traditional pre-New Year celebration tonight at 8 p.m. at the Marikina Riverbank Amphitheater.

Now on its 9th year, the thanksgiving show is offered free to Marikina residents and their families as a show of gratitude for the blessings of 2004 and of good wishes for 2005, from the local government and business establishments.

The evening is hosted by Marilou de Guzman, the Dugong character in "Marina," and Chokoleit, Perly on the same teleserye.

The evening is divided into three portions, led by "Kultura Marikina" featuring Nolyn Cabahug, Liza Cabahug, the Bagong Himig Chorale, the Kayumanggi Maharlika Dance Troupe and the Marikina Rondalla.

A mini fashion show will showcase Filipiniana formal wear by Lito Perez.

In Part II, invited to perform are Ai Ai de las Alas, Bayani Agbayani, Aiza Seguerra, Salbakuta, Renz Verano, Jinky Llamanzares and the Solid Gold Dancers.

Part III will have "Panunumpa," where the city government officials headed by Mayor Marides C. Fernando pledge to lead the Marikenyos to a better and cleaner Marikina; plus an all-star cast grand finale and a colorful display of fireworks.

Dance music by Richard Villanueva and his Rated R band follows.

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MTRCB RATING ▸ GP
VILMA SANTOS CHRISTOPHER DE LEON
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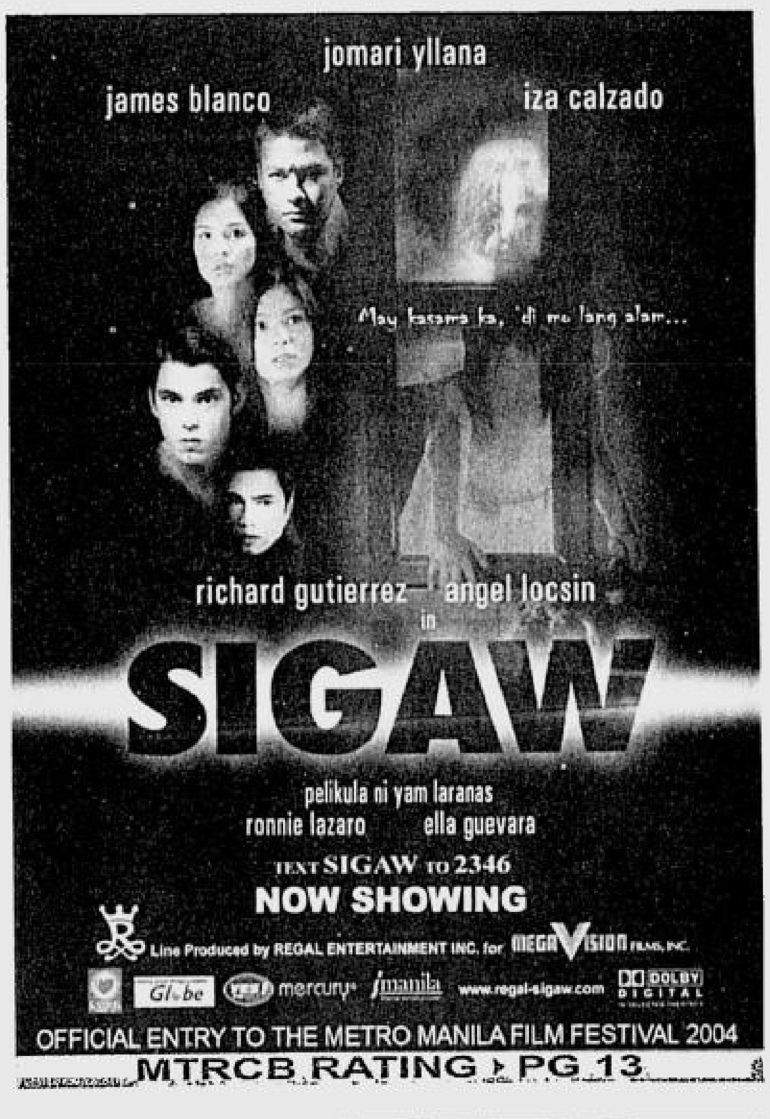

jomari yllana
james blanco iza calzado
May kasama ka, 'di mo lang alam...
richard gutierrez angel locsin
in
SIGAW
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Paolo Contis Ciara Sotto introducing Drew Arellano
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SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
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SIGAW NG SAMBAYANAN, LASTIKMAN ANG NO. 1 SUPERHERO NG BAYAN!
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TUESDAY VARGAS MIKEL CAMPOS
AND CHERIE GIL AS LASTIKA
SARAH GERONIMO
MARK BAUTISTA
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DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES
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B MTRCB RATING ▸ PG 13
RAYMART SANTIAGO JAY MANALO DENNIS TRILLO
ANITA LINDA Ms. JACLYN JOSE ANGELU DE LEON TJ TRINIDAD IYA VILLANIA MARCO ALCARAZ YASMIEN KURDI
JUDY ANN SANTOS
AISHITE IMASU MAHAL KITA 1941
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Video pirates feast on death of FPJ

By Jerry Esplanada

A WEEK after Fernando Poe Jr. was buried, video pirates are still cashing in on the death of "Da King"—selling pirated copies of his movies for as low as P18 each.

Pirated VCDs of the movies of the legend, sold at bargain prices, have been selling briskly in Metro Manila's video piracy hotspots, the INQUIRER learned.

FPJ films sell for only P18 per VCD at the Muslim Barter Trade Center on Arlegui Street in, Quiapo, described by some intellectual property rights and consumer activists as the "symbol of government's losing battle against piracy," at a newly-opened shopping mall across that specializes in similar counterfeit items; and the nearby Carriedo shopping quarter.

Incidentally, FPJ earned P18 a

VIDEO/ A24

Fernando Poe, Jr.
Susan Roces
Perlas ng Silangan
Viva Video
FERNANDO POE JR.
SHARON CUNETA
MJ
KAHIT KONTING PAGTINGIN

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SUPERSTARS
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Lahat ng text updates at downloads ng inyong favorite stars ay available na sa Talk 'N Text Superstars!

Over 400 stars ang puwedeng pagpilian! Kaya mag-text at mag-download na!

For more stars,
text **SUPERSTARS** to **211**

P2.50 per text message

Heto na ang mga stars na puwede niyong kadikit! Text <keyword> to <number>!
Example: Text SARAH to 291

Name	Keyword	Number
Sarah Geronimo	SARAH	291
Judy Ann Santos	JUDAY	320
Jericho Rosales	ECHO	320
Kristine Hermosa	KRISTINE	320
Robin Padilla	ROBIN	320
Marvin Agustin	MARVIN	320
Dominic Ochoa	DOMINIC	320
Dolphy	DOLPHY	320
Manny Pacquiao	PACMAN	290
Mark Bautista	MARK	291
Sheryn Regis	SHERYN	291
Christian Bautista	CHRISTIAN	291
Rachelle Ann Go	RACHELLE	291
Aubrey Miles	AUBREY	320
Hazel Cabrera	HAZEL	291
Ara Mina	ARA	320
Pops Fernandez	POPS	320
Joyce Jimenez	JOYCE	320
Angelica Jones	ANGELICA	320
Katya Santos	KATYA	291
Andrea Del Rosario	ANDREA	291
Ella V	ELLA	291
Jen Rosendahl	JENR	291
Sheree	SHEREE	291
Asia Agcaoili	ASIA	291
Gwen Garci	GWEN	291
Myles Hernandez	MYLES	291
Dina Bonnevie	DINA	320
Angel Aquino	ANGEL	320
Albert Martinez	ALBERT	320
Dice & K9	DICEK9	291
Nina	NINA	291
Art Strong	ARTSTRONG	291
Kitchie Nadal	KITCHIE	291
Gloc9	GLOC9	291
Divo	DIVO	291
Raymond Manalo	RAYMOND	291
Viva Hotmen	HOTMEN	291
Masculados	MASCULADOS	320
Gary Estrada	GARY	320
Ana Capri	ANA	320
Mickey Ferriols	MICKEY	320
Angeline Aguilar	ANGELINE	320
Bernadette Allyson	BERNAALLISON	320
Regine Tolentino	REGINET	320
Patrick Garcia	PATRICK	320
Chesca Garcia	CHESCA	320
Francine Prieto	FRANCINE	320
Greg Martin	GREG	320
Troy Montero	TROY	320
Tintin Bersola	TINTINBERSOLA	320
Carmina Villaroel	CARMINA	320
Willie Revillame	WILLIE	2213

At pwede ring ka-text ang inyong favorite PBA Players!
Text <keyword> to <number>!
Example: Text ALAPAG to 290

Name	Keyword	Number
Jimmy Alapag	ALAPAG	290
Willie Miller	MILLER	290
Rich Alvarez	ALVAREZ	290
Tony Dela Cruz	DELACRUZ	290
James Yap	YAP	290
Paul Artadi	ARTADI	290
Ronald Tubid	TUBID	290
Alvin Patrimonio	PATRIMONIO	290
John Ferriols	FERRIOLS	290
Kenneth Duremdes	DUREMDES	290
Mac Cuan	CUAN	290
Enrico Villanueva	VILLANUEVA	290
Mike Cortez	CORTEZ	290
Mark Telan	TELAN	290
Patrick Fran	FRAN	290
Nino Gelig	GELIG	290
Francisco Omolon	OMOLON	290
Wesley Gonzales	GONZALES	290
Olsen Racela	RACELA	290
Danny Ildefonso	ILDEFONSO	290
Dondon Hontiveros	HONTIVEROS	290
Ali Peek	PEEK	290
RenRen Ritualo	RITUALO	290

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Drop in local oil prices seen in early '05

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTORISTS may be given another treat this coming new year as world oil prices continue to soften.

The Department of Energy said there was a big possibility that local pump prices would go down again in the coming days.

Based on documents from the DOE, the benchmark Dubai crude fell to a December average of $34.27 a barrel from $34.87 last month.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products likewise dropped to $44.93 a barrel in the Dec. 1-28 period from a high of $52.45 in November.

MOPS-based diesel, after rising almost incessantly these past weeks, shed $5.22 a barrel, registering a December average of $51.60 a barrel from last month's 56.82 a barrel.

Considering these declining prices, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez urged local oil firms to effect corresponding adjustments in their pump prices soon.

"World oil prices have eased in December from last month's record. I am calling on oil firms to further reduce prices of petroleum products, net of the impact of the two (percentage point) tariff increase," he said.

Just before Christmas, local oil firms reduced gasoline prices by between 30 centavos and 35 centavos a liter.

A week before that, independent oil firm PTT Philippines Corp. cut prices of its gasoline and diesel fuel by 50 centavos a liter.

Also a few days before Christmas, Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc., Total (Philippines) Corp. and Pryce Gases Inc. also reduced prices of their cooking gas by P1 a kilogram or by P11 a cylinder.

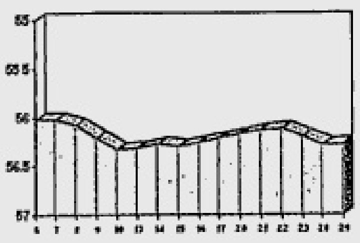
While the softening of world oil prices could translate to lower prices at the pump, local oil firms could pass on an additional 30 centavos a liter to consumers starting next month when the 5-percent tariff on crude and refined petroleum products takes effect.

From the current 3 percent, the import levy will be raised to 5 percent starting Jan. 1, 2005.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



DECEMBER

P 56.28 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 29, 2004

¥ 103.22 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 29, 2004

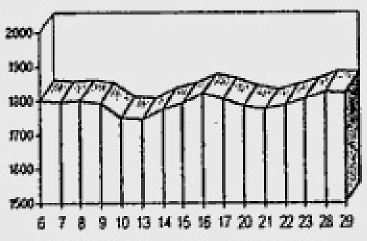
GOLD: $443.70-444.20
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 29, 2004

December 29, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.734538	1.000000	56.2670
Japan	Yen	0.007128	0.009704	0.5460
United Kingdom	Pound	1.416189	1.928000	108.4828
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094498	0.128649	7.2387
Switzerland	Franc	0.648141	0.882379	49.6488
Canada	Dollar	0.603366	0.821423	46.2190
Singapore	Dollar	0.449204	0.611546	34.4099
Australia	Dollar	0.571758	0.778392	43.7978
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.948222	2.652309	149.2375
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.195872	0.266660	15.0042
Brunei	Dollar	0.447835	0.609682	34.3050
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000079	0.000107	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.018812	0.025611	1.4411
UAE	Dirham	0.200015	0.272301	15.3216
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.361400	76.6019
Argentina	Peso	0.247528	0.336984	18.9611
Brazil	Real	0.273073	0.371761	20.9179
Denmark	Kroner	0.134398	0.182969	10.2951
India	Rupee	0.016832	0.022915	1.2894
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.193325	0.263193	14.8091
Mexico	New Peso	0.065467	0.089127	5.0149
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530199	0.721813	40.6143
South Africa	Rand	0.130934	0.178253	10.0298
Korea	Won	0.000705	0.000960	0.0540
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022937	0.031226	1.7570

STOCK MARKET

Shares end slightly lower on profit-taking

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

THE PHILIPPINE stock index finished marginally lower yesterday—the last trading day of the year—as investors took profit following recent gains.

Some last-minute window-dressing activity limited the main index's fall, they added.

The few investors left in the market continued to ignore the impact of Sunday's earthquake and tidal waves which have left many coastal communities around south and southeast Asia devastated.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 3.15 points, or 0.2 percent, at 1,822.83, after rising 2.8 percent in the past three sessions. The index ended the year 26 percent higher compared with the index close of 1,442.37 at the end of 2003.

Turnover totaled 1.39 billion shares worth P908.4 million, against 722.1 million shares worth P772.6 million on Tuesday. *AP, AFP*

Embattled pre-need firm still awaiting investor

A SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) management committee overseeing the operations of troubled pre-need firm Asian Diamond Plans Inc. said there may be hope of reviving the company if only an investor will come forward with at least P10 million.

The fate of Asian Diamond will hinge on the infusion of fresh cash in order to kickstart investments for its trust fund since the pre-need's plans will mature in the next three to five years, giving it enough time to raise the money.

A source said the SEC was also willing to consider a mixed infusion of both cash and property from a potential investor should any be keenly interested.

The SEC is also considering the possibility of allowing the company to amortize or breakdown payments to cover for its net liabilities in the next five years.

At presstime, however, no investor has yet come forward to rescue the company in light of the SEC's deadline to give the company until the end of the year to look for an investor to inject fresh capital.

There was interest though from one local and one British national but no formal agreement has been presented to the SEC at presstime yesterday.

In the absence of a new investor, the SEC will distribute the assets of the pre-need firm among all its estimated 4,000 planholders, resulting in the shutdown of the company. The management committee will meet again next year to present its final recommendation to the Commission.

The SEC issued a letter early this month informing planholders of the status of the pre-need firm and of its plan to liquidate the company's assets if no investor comes in by Dec. 31. *Elizabeth Sanchez*

SSS reserves seen lasting till 2019

THE STATE-OWNED pension fund Social Security System, whose reserves were originally expected to be depleted by 2015, has bought a little more time for itself but needed more remedial measures to attain long-term financial health.

In its yearend press briefing yesterday, SSS president Corazon dela Paz said the actuarial life of the pension fund had now been extended by four more years to 2019 due to key administrative reforms and the one-percentage increase in members' contribution to 9.4 percent of earnings in early 2003.

"We were able to buy time because instead of 2015, our actuarial life has gone up to 2019, but that doesn't mean we've solved the problem," Dela Paz said.

At the very least, she said the SSS had arrested the fund depletion seen over the last few years. However, she said several bills recently filed in the Senate seeking to increase the members' benefits could accelerate, instead of delay, the fund depletion.

The SSS' stand is that any increase in benefits will be acceptable only for as long as there is a corresponding increase in contribution so as not to further compromise its fragile financial position.

This year, the SSS has narrowed down its deficit—or the differential between the amount released to members in the form of benefits and the contribution collected—to only P400 million.

The deficit stood much higher at P7.6 billion in 2002, but sharply declined to P3.4 billion in

SSS/B2

Bad loan ratio of local banks rises to 14.21%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BAD loans of local commercial banks went up for the second straight month to 14.21 percent of total loans at end-October from 13.9 percent at end-September, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

This developed as a 2.4-percent slowdown in lending outmatched a meager 0.2-percent drop in non-performing loans.

In nominal terms, the sector's NPLs amounted to P248.19 billion.

But despite the increase from a month ago, the end-October NPL ratio stood 0.91 percentage point better than the 15.12 percent a year ago.

Net of interbank loans, the NPL ratio was even higher at 16.84 percent, rising from 16.69 percent at end-September, still largely due to the decline in total loan portfolio.

Restructured loans as a ratio of total loans rose to 7.49 percent from 7.37 percent last month, as the total loan portfolio contracted faster than the restructured loans.

The ratio of non-performing restructured loans inched up to 54.51 percent from 53.7 percent last month.

A debt restructuring can cover a whole range of debt concessions—including the stretching out of maturities, lowering of interest rates and, in extreme cases, the conversion of debt into equity—to give the borrower some room to breath and a chance to revive its business.

The total restructured loans of the commercial bank sector amounted to P132.28 billion, of which more than half were non-performing.

When the Asian crisis erupted in 1997, banks wanted to collect at all cost and were reluctant to restructure. Generally, foreclosure was always the last option because of the banking system's rising real and other properties owned and acquired (Ropoas) as well as the costly foreclose proceedings.

At end-October, the ratio of Ropoas to gross assets went down to 5.61 percent from 5.65 percent a month ago.

A 0.2-percent contraction in Ropoa to P208.06 billion was complemented by the 0.4-percent growth in gross assets.

The sector's non-performing assets were favorably down to 12.19 percent from 12.27 percent last month and a year ago's 13.39 percent as the bad assets shrunk by 0.2 percent to P449.29 billion and were even boosted by the 0.4-percent rise in gross assets.

Meanwhile, the NPL and NPA coverage ratios declined over the month to 52.61 percent and 32.55 percent, respectively, from 52.96 percent and 32.69 percent.

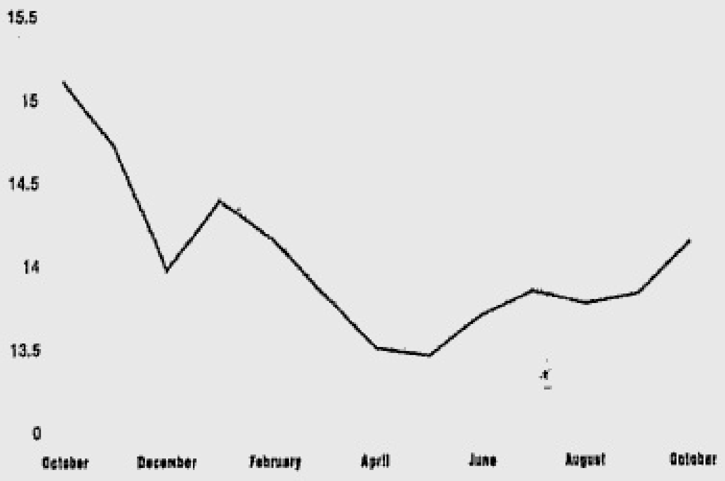
"These were the results of the faster drop in allowance for probable losses, particularly on loans, than the decreases in NPLs and NPAs," the BSP said.

At end-October, loan-loss reserves stood at P130.56 billion while the NPA reserves amounted to P146.26 billion.

The BSP expects the sector's NPA ratio to improve significantly once banks consummate asset sale deals under the Special Purpose Asset Vehicle framework.

The SPV Law intends to help banks get rid of their non-performing assets by waiving some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets. It waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value-added tax) and likewise reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

COMMERCIAL BANK'S NON-PERFORMING LOANS
October 2003 to October 2004, in percent



PAL remains reluctant to move to Naia 3

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Airlines yesterday said it was willing to move its operations to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 if it could maintain integrated operations of overseas and domestic flights for passenger and cargo.

The flag carrier said the government should also keep aviation fees unchanged if it would decide to transfer to the new terminal.

PAL president Jaime Bautista said that if the airline controlled by taipan Lucio Tan would move to Naia 3, the company would have to shoulder added costs of hiring more people and buying more aircraft to maximize operations.

The Arroyo administration said it could open Naia 3 for commercial operations within the first half of 2005 after taking over the facility last week amid unresolved arbitration cases against the private group that built the terminal.

The new terminal would need the business volume of the country's biggest airline so it would be viable. But it may also have to raise aviation fees to recover costs.

PAL operates 32 aircraft for its domestic and international passenger and cargo routes. It has been using the relatively new Naia 2 exclusively to service passengers while all other carriers use the Naia 1, the oldest terminal facility.

PAL's cargo operations are located near Naia 1. While Naia 3 is designed to handle 28 aircraft at any given time and 13 million passengers a year, it has no cargo terminal and building one would take at least 18 months.

"We enjoy operating under one roof but we are willing to move to Naia 3 if we can still integrate domestic and international (operations), including the cargo. They must also charge us the same rate for everything, all the fees like parking, take off, landing, etc," Bautista said.

The PAL chief said if these conditions were met, it would also be advantageous for the flag carrier to use a newer and bigger aviation terminal.

He said moving to Naia 3 would require PAL to expand its fleet by two to three aircraft. The airline, according to Bautista,

PAL/B2

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SUN CELLULAR

DEBT REDUCTION FIRST

PLDT to pursue restructuring

By Clarissa S. Batino

PLDT may soon become a subsidiary of Smart

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said the reversal of the roles of parent firm PLDT and its cash-rich unit Smart Communications Inc. will have to wait until 2007 at the earliest.

Pangilinan said in a briefing that the restructuring had to be put off as PLDT must first reduce its debt and increase profits.

PLDT earlier aired plans to make cellular phone operator Smart the parent firm, and PLDT the subsidiary, to bring down operating costs and avoid having to list cash-rich Smart at the stock market.

Pangilinan, however, said that pursuing the restructuring now would only distract management, as the group has to clear hurdles, such as getting regulatory approvals and rearranging the books.

"Work is tremendous and it just distracts management from the more important task of delivering the profits and the cash flows. Now, when the debts are down, particularly on the fixed line side, and a steady net income, then you can have the luxury of looking at restructuring," he added.

He said PLDT could revisit the corporate reversal with Smart by 2007.

"There'll be a time for us to look at this, but not now. That's why we're telling government to give us time since nothing is forever. Next year will be a good year and 2006 will be another great year for the group—so let's do that, let's accomplish that first," Pangilinan said.

Smart is mandated by its congressional franchise to offer about 30 percent of its shares to the public not later than August 2004, or three years after it started operations.

The country's largest wireless company whose IPO is being counted on to help revive a sluggish stock market, however, had abandoned public offering plans.

Pangilinan said that while waiting for the right time to pursue the long-range plan, PLDT will continue to merge operations that were earlier split.

"Those telcos that have disintegrated themselves like NTT (of Japan) are having a serious revisiting of their model. Their plan to offer bundled services is mitigated by the fact that they have separate entities and competition offers bundled services, especially new players," he said.

"For PLDT, the approach is an integrated one, since that makes a lot of sense," Pangilinan said.

PLDT is anticipating a P24-billion profit this year, against P11.2 billion in 2003.

The bulk of the profits will still come from the wireless group, which integrated the books of Smart and Talk N' Text operator Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Smart yesterday increased its stake in Piltel to 85.6 percent from 32.7 percent after converting preferred shares equivalent to 9.26 billion common shares.

Smart plans to acquire as much as 92 percent of Piltel from PLDT.

"It is 85 percent for now. Once we have converted all the preferred, and once we acquire the remaining shares, it will go up to 92 percent, which will be the final figure. Eight percent will be held by a third party including the public," said Debbie Tan, corporate information officer of Piltel.

In July, Smart converted 4.825 million preferred shares, that gave it 820.25 million common shares or 32.7 percent in Piltel.

Piltel, according to its president Napoleon Nazareno, is key to Smart's penetration of the D and E markets.

BCDA, John Hay developer seek win-win solution

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and CJH Development Corp. (CJHDC) are in the initial stages of negotiating a win-win solution to ensure the continuing development of Camp John Hay, the premier forest tourist resort north of Manila, said Filadelfo Rojas Jr., BCDA chair.

Rojas also said that the BCDA "will honor its warranty that CJHDC will enjoy the regime of tax and duty exemptions guaranteed under the Lease Agreement entered into by the BCDA and CJHDC on Oct. 19, 1996, RA No. 7227, and the JHSEZ Implementing Rules and Regulations."

Robert John Sobrepeña, CJHDC CEO and chair, belied newspaper reports that CJHDC has again defaulted on its lease payments.

Sobrepeña said he was optimistic that the ongoing negotiations with BCDA would correct or mitigate the damage caused by the issue created by the Supreme Court decision, which was purely legal in nature and was not caused by either BCDA or CJHDC.

GMA-7 forecasts ₱1.5B in net income for 2004

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TELEVISION giant GMA Network Inc. said it was on the way to meeting its net income target for the year of P1.5 billion, after reporting a 27 percent growth in its net income in the first 11 months to P1.43 billion.

GMA –7 posted revenues of P6.9 billion as of end-November, up 18 percent from last year's P5.85 billion.

Operating expenses jumped 19 percent to P3.3 billion as production costs, salaries, advertising and promotion, amortization of program rights and other expenses swelled in line with the company's efforts to maintain its lead in the ratings game.

Total assets of the company expanded 12 percent to P8.1 billion during the period.

Liabilities, on the other hand, dropped 13 percent to P2.46 billion compared to last year's figure.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) for the first 11 months amounted to P2.76 billion, a 19 percent increase over the same period last year.

Citing poll results based on Mega Manila household data from AGB Philippines and Nielsen Media from January to November this year, GMA-7 said it overtook rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. in average total day ratings.

GMA-7 posted an average total day rating of 16.9 percent versus ABS-CBN's 15.6 percent according to AGB's poll, and registered an average total day rating of 13.5 percent versus ABS-CBN's 11.8 percent based on data from Nielsen.

GMA-7 expects a better year ahead with the launch of its international channel and its initial public offering slated in the first quarter of 2005.

The company expects to raise roughly P9 billion when it sells its shares to the public.

In line with its move to maintain its pole position in the industry, the company has laid the groundwork for its regional expansion, beginning with Cebu this year.

Don't bet on mine revenue, gov't urged

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Mines has urged the government not to expect too much revenue from mining projects.

According to the Chamber of Mines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez, the estimated revenue to be generated by mining projects may come in trickles beginning next year.

"While there is a feeling of euphoria (with the reversal of the Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of the Philippine Mining Law), they (the government) may be expecting too much too soon," said Romualdez. "There are issues still to be resolved."

He said that national and local government units could expect revenue to come from mining exploration, construction and actual mining production.

According to Walter Brown, Philex Mining Corp. president, mining projects have long "gestating periods."

He said the entire project—from the exploration phase to the conduct of feasibility studies, construction and actual mining production—may take six to seven years.

And due to the protracted court battle over the legality of the Philippine mining law, as well as other issues, the country now ranks last, in terms of mineral exports, among Southeast Asian countries, Brown said.

Data from the Mines Bureau indicated that from a peak of $1.2 billion in 1980, mineral export revenues declined to less than $500 million beginning 2000.

The Mines Bureau also showed that only 30 percent of the country's land area had been explored for mineral deposits.

If the mining projects now in the pipeline are not derailed over the next six years, the Philippines may expect revenue of at least $2.814 billion each year from the sale of gold, copper, nickel and other minerals, according to the study of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"Large scale mining projects now in the exploration and development stage will hopefully generate the needed revenues for the government," said Leo Jasareno, head engineer of the Mining Tenements Division.

In her 10-point agenda, President Macapagal-Arroyo listed down the mining projects to be pursued: the Rapu Rapu Polymetallic Project, the Rio Tuba Nickel Project, the Masbate Gold Project, the Diwalwal Direct State Development Project, the Adlay Project, the Nonoc Iron Fines Project, the Didipio Copper-Gold Project, the Victoria II Gold Project, Padcal Copper Expansion Project, the King King Copper Gold Project, the Tampacan Copper Project, Itogon Gold Project, the Canatuan Gold Project, Far-Southeast Gold Project, Boyungan Copper Project, Pujada Nickel Project, Toledo Copper Project, San Antonio Copper Project, Mindoro Nickel Project, Nonoc Nickel Project, Batong Buhay Gold Project and the Amacan Copper Project.

"However, to develop the mines there is a need for foreign capital," Jasareno said.

The 22 identified mining projects would need capital investments of at least $6 billion in the next six years. The projects are expected to generate some 41,400 jobs during the construction phase and a total of 210,426 during the commercial phase.

The Philippines is one of the least explored countries in the so-called ring of fire, an area of the Asia-Pacific said to be rich in mineral resources but vulnerable to volcanic eruptions.

In 1995, the Philippine government tried to attract more investment in the mining industry when it allowed foreign firms up to 100 percent equity in mining projects as compared to the 40 percent that was previously allowed.

However, the liberalization was stalled when tribal groups came to challenge the legality of the Mining Act, and a mining firm accidentally dumped tailings at the Boac River in Marinduque.

SSS reserves seen lasting till 2019

From page B1

2003 when the one-percentage increase in contribution was implemented.

This year, she said the SSS would likely post a net income of at least P2.4 billion on the back of an expected 12-percent growth in revenue to P44 billion from a year ago.

Aside from the positive impact of the 2003 increase in members' contribution, the first time in three years, Dela Paz said the SSS was benefiting from key administrative reforms.

For instance, she said the fund had doubled the number of people at its inspection department to "cover more ground."

Also, she said the fund had expanded its teller services this year, supplementing the payment services offered by the banks.

"We can see that there are good results on this. Also, our account officers are encouraging members not just to pay the minimum (average) amount of P1,000 but to increase this to P3,000 because we know that they are receiving more (income)," Dela Paz said.

But while current developments extended the actuarial life of the SSS to 2019, two Senate bills seeking higher members' benefits are seen to shorten this to as early as 2008 without corresponding increases in contribution.

Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 28, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	1,297,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27.5	28	26.5	26.5	1,396,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52.5	52.5	52	52.5	1,485,100
China Banking Corp.	575	575	560	560	1,300
Citystate Savings Bank	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	3,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47.5	48	47.5	48	22,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	60,000
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	263,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	26.5	26.5	409,800
Philippine National Bank	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	300
Philippine Trust Co.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	896,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	12,100
Security Bank Corporation	28	29	28	29	85,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	1,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.4	40,000
First Abacus Financial	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2480	2480	2480	2480	370
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	520,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	110	110	109	109	50,300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1815	1830	1815	1830	2,700
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.76	1.76	1.7	1.74	9,645,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	965	965	950	955	2,400
Ipeople Inc	3.4	3.45	3.05	3.05	146,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	370,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.32	2.36	2.2	2.36	90,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.55	2.65	7,463,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	15,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1370	1375	1350	1360	171,930
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.68	0.65	0.65	22,440,000
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	20,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.5	44,700
Manila Electric Co. B	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.75	358,000
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.25	2,383,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	42,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	510,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,500,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	7,310,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	2.02	1.96	1.98	7,058,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	22,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28.5	52,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
RFM Corporation	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	70,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	59	58.5	59	68,300
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74	75	329,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0048	20,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	8,000,000
Ayala Corporation	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	2,902,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	60,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	120,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	44,000
APC Group Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	20,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.72	40,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.83	0.83	0.75	0.75	130,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	16	16	16	16	6,400
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.69	0.67	0.68	20,460,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	780,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.21	0.21	900,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.11	0.115	0.11	0.115	670,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.8	8,018,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.029	1,600,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	130,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.65	670,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.79	0.8	0.79	0.8	20,000
F&J Prince Hldgs. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	31	31	30	30	669,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	2.75	2.8	2.7	2.7	1,006,000
Keppel Holdings	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	750,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.4	2.48	2.32	2.34	450,000
Medco Holdings	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.33	360,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	1,000,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.26	400,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	9,940,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	450,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	200,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	340,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	4,100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.185	0.19	140,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	5,000
Euro-Med Lab Phil Inc.	2.6	2.85	2.6	2.85	5,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.62	211,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	700,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.98	1	0.95	0.95	2,140,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.5	0.57	0.5	0.55	150,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	33	33	33	33	1,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	30,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	680,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	41,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.5	9.9	9.1	9.8	1,111,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	12,795,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	3,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	1,760,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	2,190,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	80,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.34	7,440,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.12	8,155,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	280,000
City & Land Developers	2	2	2	2	3,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	10,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	88,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	210,000
SM Development Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.4	25,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	5,034,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	64,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.85	484,000
Benguet Corp. A	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	55,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.55	3.75	3.55	3.6	1,210,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.39	0.41	0.38	0.41	92,740,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.45	58,230,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	359,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	375,900,000
Omico Corporation	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	40,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.7	0.76	0.7	0.75	8,200,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.76	0.8	0.76	0.8	11,070,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	320,000
OIL					
Imperial Res	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	5,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	11,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0044	0.0046	0.0044	0.0046	97,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Pacifica	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	1,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.38	2.4	2.34	2.34	140,000
Sinophil Corp	0.047	0.049	0.043	0.046	800,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	10,000

DISCLOSURES

UNIWIDE Holdings Inc. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 4, 8 a.m. at the Uniwide Warehouse Club, Novaliches, Quezon City. Only stockholders of record as of Jan. 12, 2005 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

CENTRAL Azucarera de Tarlac will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Jan. 25, 11 a.m. at the Alto Pavilion, San Miguel, Tarlac City. Only stockholders of record as of Jan. 3 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PRUDENTIAL Bank approved amendments to its by-laws pertaining to the compensation of its directors and compliance to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' directive for the internal director of the bank to report directly to the board through its audit committee.

* * *

BANK of the Philippine Islands declared a cash dividend of P0.80 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Jan. 15 and will be payable on Jan. 30.

Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research

PAL remains . . .

From page B1

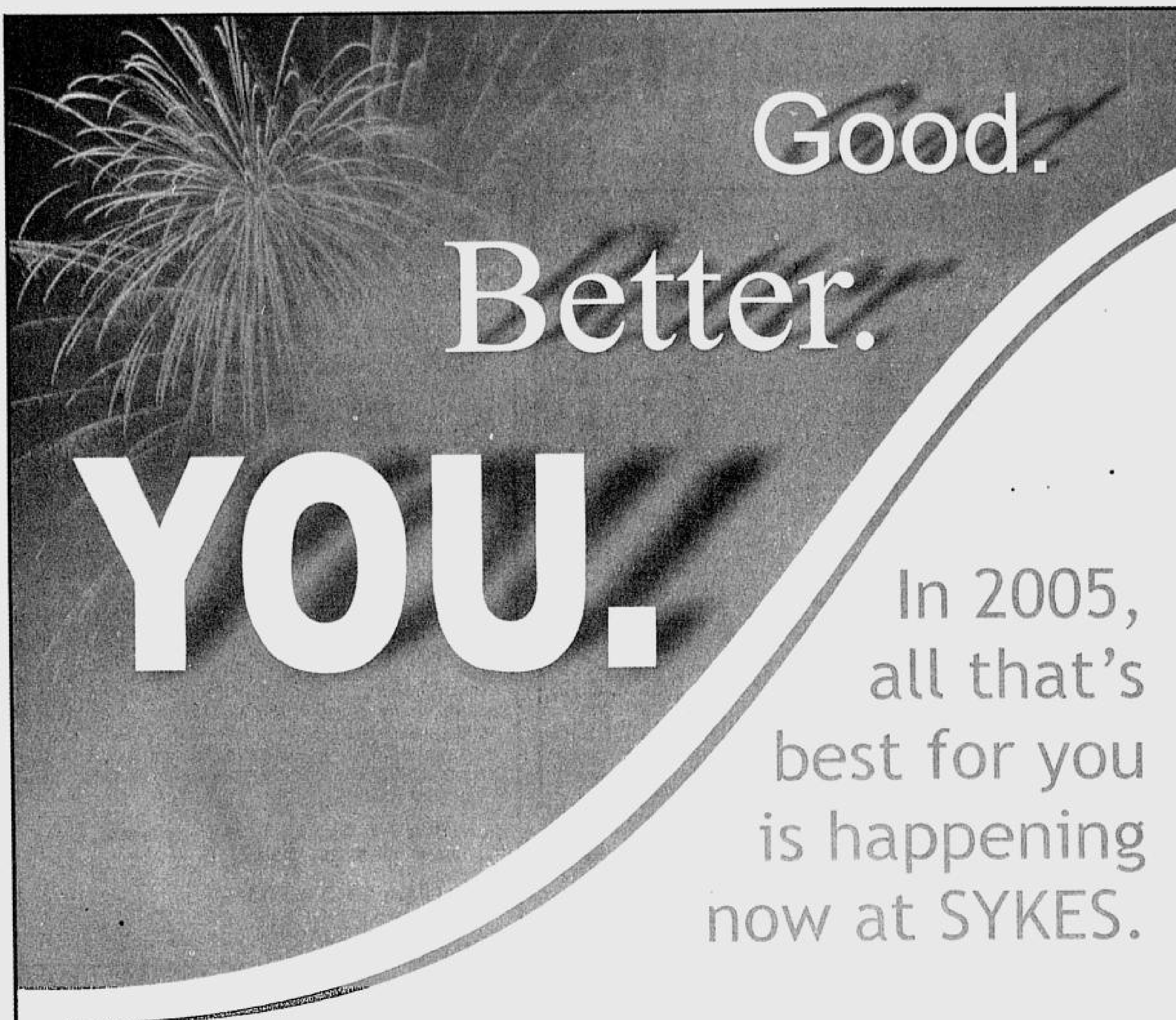
would also need more staff to manage a bigger location.

At the Naia 2, he said it was easier to move people and cargo to connecting flights. Cargo accounts for 12 to 15 percent of PAL's revenue.

"We need a cargo terminal that is very near the passenger terminal and currently Naia 3 has no cargo terminal. A substantial portion of revenue comes from the belly of the plane that carries cargo," Bautista explained.

He said cargo operations complement an airline's passenger service. For other airlines, cargo accounts for half of their total sales. For PAL, 70 percent of revenue comes from overseas flights and the remaining 30 percent from domestic trips.

Bautista said the government would not be losing money if PAL would decide to stay in Naia 2. "They will still get the same revenue that they are getting now from Naia 2."



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- Operations Managers
- Account Supervisors
- Technical Services Manager
- Team Leads
- Software Quality Assurance Manager
- English Monitoring Manager

OPERATIONS

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- Customer Service Representatives
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  - *Insurance*
  - *Credit & Collection*
- Technical Support Engineers
- Technical Support Engineers
  - *Routers & Networking*
- Technical Support Representatives *(Cantonese)*
- Reports Analysts
- Data Analysts
- Customer Service Representatives
  - *Spanish*
  - *Italian*

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Strategies to push wind energy projects bared

DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines (DBP) president & CEO Reynaldo G. David has proposed several strategies and measures to further promote and support the development and viability of wind energy projects in the country during the Philippine Wind Energy Summit held recently at the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati City.

Presenting the recommendations of the Summit's Financial Committee, which he headed, David said that the financial viability of wind energy projects is contingent on the need to come up with an ideal funding mix of official development assistance (ODA) loans, grant and equity. Since commercial loans alone cannot ensure the financial viability of wind energy projects, he also underscored that elevating these types of projects into a clean development mechanism (CDM) project enhances the revenue streams through carbon credits.

David also emphasized the need to address major barriers to the development and viability of wind energy projects. He thus cited DBP's commitment to lower its interest rate from 9.75 percent to 7.75 for wind power projects, as well as the need for a realistic tariff structure to reflect the projects' all-in cost.

In response to the lack of financing for the preparatory activities of wind energy projects, David proposed more aggressive fund sourcing activities to augment available funds under the DBP Finesse Program. He also announced that the Bank has already committed to mobilize funds from its P50-billion available funds to help finance new and renewable energy (NRE) projects.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Energy (DoE), the Philippine Wind Energy Summit was attended by more than 280 participants from 67 non-government organizations (NGOs) and private companies and investors, 16 government agencies, embassies and media networks. Other highlights of the event were the presentation of 16 wind sites which have a potential of up to 345 megawatts, the signing of pre-commercial contracts (PCC) agreements among Trans-Asia Renewable Energy Corporation, San Carlos Wind Power Corporation and the Philippine Hybrid Energy Systems, Inc. for the development of six potential wind sites in Sual, Pangasinan; San Carlos City, Negros Occidental; Marinduque; Baleno, Masbate; Abra de Ilog, Mindoro Oriental; and Tablas, Romblon.

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- Bachelor's degree in any business course
- Articulate, competent, committed and consistent. Superb skills in communications, client relations and negotiation
- Computer literate and adept at research and the Internet
- Experience in developing consumer service products is an asset
- International driving license an advantage

Graphic Designer/Copywriter

- Bachelor's degree in any fine arts or mass communications course
- Able to conceptualize and design software based and freehand based creatives
- Knowledge of usual graphic design software and all office applications is an expected requisite.
- Web design skills are an advantage
- Strong writing skills. Experience as a writer is a strong advantage
- Presentable with good communication and presentation skills.
- Single female not more than 28 years of age

EVENTS ASSISTANT (PART-TIME)

- Experience in managing events is a plus but must have experience in working at trade shows or golf tournaments
- Pleasant looks and disposition (Must include photo) with good customer and client relations
- A bachelor's degree in any field is an advantage
- Single female not more than 26 years of age
- This temporary position is based in the Philippines
- Please quote expected remuneration on a per day and per month basis

CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER

- Must possess excellent telephone etiquette and have a pleasant disposition
- Call centre management experience an important advantage
- Committed, hardworking and excellent attitude
- Single female not more than 30 years of age

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, Region VII, Cebu City is inviting all interested licensed operators of vessels/barges whether owned through Baroboat/Time/Voyage Charter to apply for eligibility and to bid under the Letter Agreement for Vessel/Barge Hire for the shipment of rice from Cebu City to various destinations as indicated below:

VOLUME SCHEDULED FOR SEA DISPERSAL

DESTINATION		No. of Lots	Maximum Quantity/Lot (bags)	Freight Rate/bag	Approved Budget for the Contract per Lot
Province	Port				
Camotes Is.	Poro	10	7,000	16.70	116,900.00
Bantayan Is.	Sta. Fe	12	7,000	19.30	135,100.00
Bohol	Tagbilaran	1	18,000	22.30	401,400.00
		16	15,000		334,500.00
	Ubay	3	4,000	17.40	69,600.00
Negros Or.	Dumaguete	4	25,000	20.80	520,000.00
		5	18,000		374,400.00
Siquijor	Larena	1	10,000	20.30	203,000.00
		3	15,000		304,500.00
N. Leyte	Tacloban	4	32,000	26.20	838,400.00
		1	27,000		707,400.00
		4	25,000		655,000.00
	Ormoc	3	15,000	22.50	337,500.00
S. Leyte	Maasin	7	16,000	22.70	363,200.00
		1	13,000		295,100.00
	Baybay	4	15,000	21.50	322,500.00
Biliran	Naval	3	27,000	24.40	658,800.00
		1	14,000		341,600.00
		1	15,000		366,000.00
W. Samar	Catbalogan	6	25,000	24.40	610,000.00
		5	16,000		390,400.00
	Calbayog	4	15,000	24.40	366,000.00
		2	10,000		244,000.00
N. Samar	San Jose	4	17,000	27.20	462,400.00
		4	18,000		489,600.00
		4	25,000		680,000.00
E. Samar	Borongan	4	13,000	32.50	422,500.00
		1	18,000		585,000.00
		4	10,000		325,000.00
	Guian	5	13,000	28.60	371,800.00
		5	9,000		257,400.00
		5	10,000		286,000.00

Summary of Bidding Procedures:

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A Single Stage, Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the Instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B. Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form.

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest on a per lot basis to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of the contract.

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Date	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	Dec. 23/04–Jan. 4/05	8:00 AM–5:00 PM
Pre-Bidding Conference	January 05, 2005	10:00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	January 20, 2005	10:00 AM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., NFA, Region VII, Cebu City after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P5,000.00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned in any for the following numbers: (032) 232-1939; (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and may accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency

(Sgd.) PIOLITO C. SANTOS
Assistant Regional Director /
RBAC Chairman

(PDI-Dec. 23 & 30, 2004)

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TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

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MERCEDES

Red MBenz P495T 8133827/8

MITSUBISHI

'90 GALANT SS 120T neg RUSH 8022912;09162318192

TOYOTA

RUSH! 94 GLI MT CASA MNTND ALL ORIG 215T 78819594

MACTAN CEBU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites all interested suppliers/installers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply of labor, materials, equipments, expertise & tools for the maintenance/servicing for one (1) year to four (4) units Escalators and three (3) units Elevators of Mactan-Cebu International Airport in the amount of P424,712.64.
2. To be registered, interested bidders must submit the following eligibility documents (in case of photocopied documents, the original must be presented):
   a. DTI/SEC Registration Certificate
   b. Mayor's Permit, Municipal License
   c. BIR Certificate of Registration
   d. Notarized affidavit certifying under oath that each documents submitted is an original copy or a true faithful reproduction or copy of the original
   e. List of completed similar transactions for at least 5 years for both supplier/installer. List of On-going and to be awarded transactions. Submit Certification of Acceptance and Turnover
   f. Audited Financial Statement for the last 2 calendar years stamped by BIR or its duly accredited & authorized institution
3. Submission of Letter of Intent with Eligibility documents will be on January 7 to 11, 2005. Distribution of Bid Documents will be on January 17 to 19, 2005 at the BAC Office from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P250.00.

   Pre-Bid Conference — January 26, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. at BAC Office
   Bid Opening — February 3, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at BAC Office (Closing at 9:45 a.m.)
4. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 3402486 local 2050 or at 341-4617.
5. Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. The procurement rules and regulations used in this transaction shall be in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 9184.
6. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect of informality, assume no obligation whatsoever or indemnity to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) VERONICA S. ORDOÑEZ
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2004 & Jan. 6, 2005)

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

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Cheap Van Rental 9330311

CARS VANS 4X4 COSTR BUS AUTOMATIC/MANUAL TRANS 8908667 8908668 8908669

P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

REVO w/driver 9272821

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1.5% CAR LOAN 534-4441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

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1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/46

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o Taking Car 5315577

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

FURNITURE/ FIXTURES

Persian Rug Handmade side L-19 W -13 P 120,000 T 8294983

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Silverson SL20 Mixer 928-1152 CF-09175243462

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PERSONAL

HOLY SPIRIT, THANK YOU!

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late NORBERTO E. ABOBON has been extrajudicially settled with an affidavit of self adjudication by his heirs as per docs 89 & 90 ; page 18; book3 ; Series of 2004 before Notary Public Atty. Jocelyn A. Ratulta (PDI -December 23, 30 ' 2004 & January 6 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), through its Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) for all projects under the Rail Sector, invites Consultants to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the MRT 3 Phase 2 Project.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The DOTC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive minor defects and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government. The DOTC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

For further inquiries, please call Engr. Roberto Jaime Q. Salazar at Tel. No. 637-3061.

(Sgd.) LEANDRO R. MENDOZA
Secretary

(PDI–December 30, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the plate No. TVL 894 registered under the name of ROSALINDA J. TINGCO was declared lost and could not be located as per affidavit dated Dec. 7, 2004 bearing Doc 458; Page 92; Book XIII; Series of 2004.
(PDI-Dec. 30,Jan 6&13,2005)

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RTW Consign 09167940002

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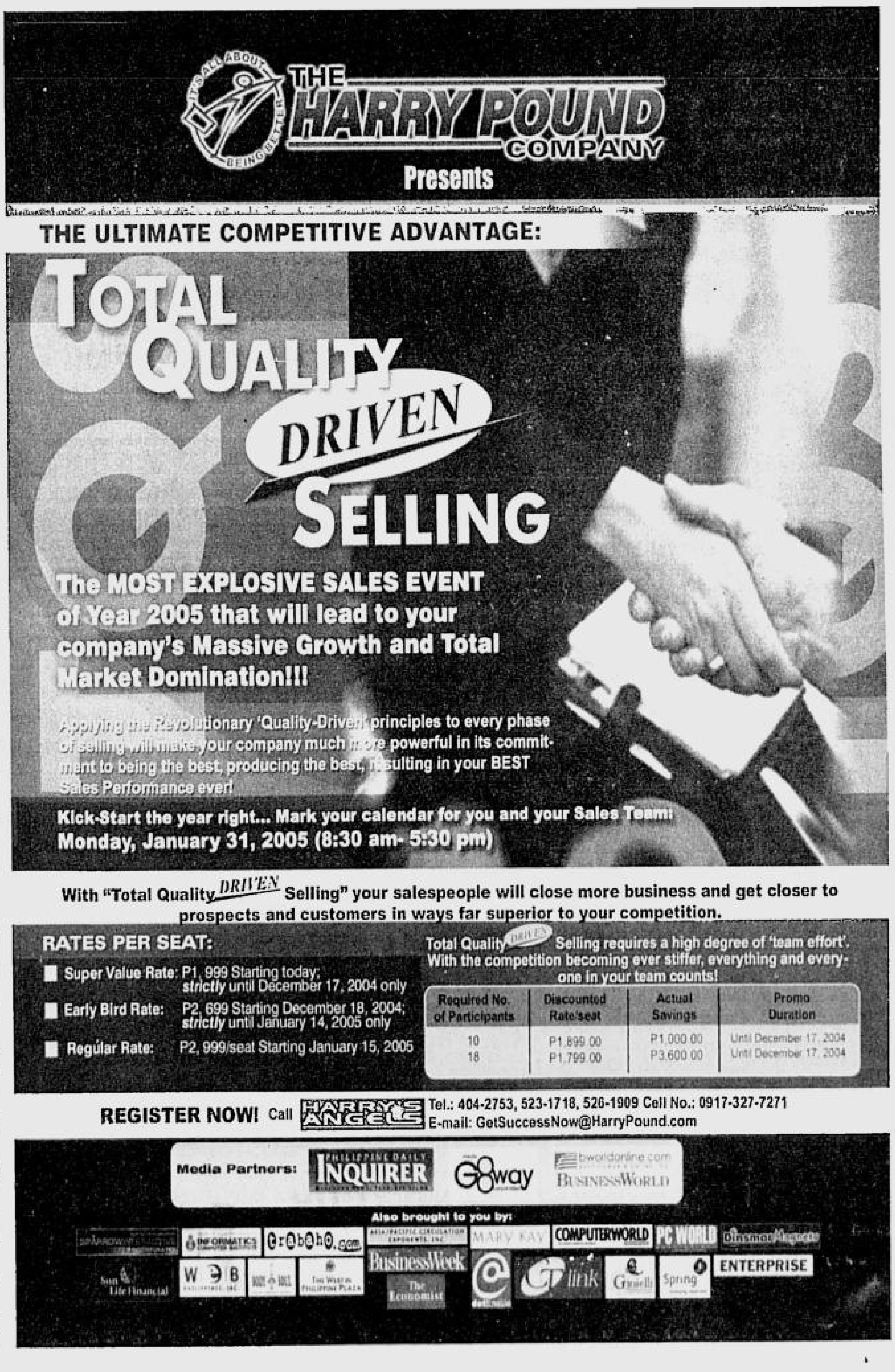
RESTAURANT Loc in Dapitan St. infront UST. Good Location Good Furnitures & Equipment Nancy 731-3402, 0917-2057392



THE HARRY POUND COMPANY
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THE ULTIMATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:

The MOST EXPLOSIVE SALES EVENT of Year 2005 that will lead to your company's Massive Growth and Total Market Domination!!!

Applying the Revolutionary 'Quality-Driven' principles to every phase of selling will make your company much more powerful in its commitment to being the best, producing the best, resulting in your BEST Sales Performance ever!

Kick-Start the year right... Mark your calendar for you and your Sales Team:
Monday, January 31, 2005 (8:30 am- 5:30 pm)

With "Total Quality DRIVEN Selling" your salespeople will close more business and get closer to prospects and customers in ways far superior to your competition.

RATES PER SEAT:
■ Super Value Rate: P1, 999 Starting today; *strictly* until December 17, 2004 only
■ Early Bird Rate: P2, 699 Starting December 18, 2004; *strictly* until January 14, 2005 only
■ Regular Rate: P2, 999/seat Starting January 15, 2005

Total Quality DRIVEN Selling requires a high degree of 'team effort'. With the competition becoming ever stiffer, everything and everyone in your team counts!

Required No. of Participants	Discounted Rate/seat	Actual Savings	Promo Duration
10	P1,899.00	P1,000.00	Until December 17, 2004
18	P1,799.00	P3,600.00	Until December 17, 2004

REGISTER NOW! Call HARRY'S ANGELS Tel.: 404-2753, 523-1718, 526-1909 Cell No.: 0917-327-7271
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THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 30, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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"The newest and most modern Funeral Home & Crematory in the country!
Trunk Line: (632) 845-2334 to 38
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OBITUARIES

Doña Carmen Marfori-Soriano

January 27, 1907 - December 27, 2004

Has joined her husband **DON JESUS SORIANO**
and now rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord and His Angels in Heaven.

She is survived by her children and grandchildren:

ROSAMAR and **EDWARD PERALTA**
Tony and **Pia**; **Tina & Tommy Tionko**; **Gina & Jonathan Stevens**; **Lee & Tachi**;
Pancho & Joy; **Joseph & Leslie**; **Lita & Roland Lansangan**, **Mavic & Kevin Hizon**

FRANCISCO "Baby" and **DALISAY**
Simeon, Amy & Jun Diano, Meg & Raul Roque,
Anthony & Rowena, John-John & Myla

TONY (†) and **NORMA**
Benjie & Chris, Lynlyn & Monjie Reyes, Ana & Leny

SONIA and **CARMELO GEMPESAW**
Lito & Maite, Abo & Silvia, Josie & JJ Barcia, Bimbo,
Pia & Carlo Ocampo, Timtom & Kay

BOBBY and **JUDY**
Joey & Yvonne, Mabelle & Chester Lemen, Macris, and **Robert**

MARIE and **VICENTE "Bimboy" TIONKO**
JT & Janet, Tommy, and **Lea**

Great Grandchildren, sister-in-law "**Fanny J. Soriano**", nephews and nieces, and other relatives.
The pious reader is requested to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains lay in state at her residence at Catalunan Grande.

Requiem Mass will be on Sunday, January 2, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at San Isidro Labrado Church,
Monte Maria Vill., Catalunan Grande, Davao City. Interment will follow at Davao Memorial Park.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved

Tagumpay "Vicky" V. Familar-Pasco

of Pasig City and Gresham, Oregon
was called to eternity to join her Creator
on December 13, 2004

Her ashes will be brought to Capilla C at Arlington East,
The Garden Chapels at 1354 C. Raymundo Ave.,
Pasig City on January 1, 2005.

They will be transferred to the James B. Rogers
Memorial Church in Wakas, Kawit, Cavite
on January 3, 2005 at 2:00 P.M.

A necrological service will be conducted on January 4, 2005
at the James B. Rogers Memorial Church.
Interment will follow at the Wakas Cemetery.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live,
even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

EMILIA ALEJANDRINO y MARTIN

of Polo, Valenzuela City
(widow of the late **LUIS A. ALEJANDRINO**)

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 28, 2004 at the age of 101.

Her loving children **DRA. CORA & PONCE REGALA; BABY & CELSO HALILI**; grandchildren **LISA ESPIRITU-KLEIN & RICK, ANTHONY, MEAH & CEL HALILI**; great grandchildren **AMELIA KLEIN & YNA HALILI**; nephew **DR. JOSE HIPOLITO** and niece **NITA H. PASCUAL** and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at her residence at Pasolo, Polo, Valenzuela City.

Interment shall be on Sunday, January 2, 2005 at the
Polo Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. Mass
at San Diego Parish Church (Polo).

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate;
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

FILOMENA FROILAN VARELA

'Feliling' to her friends
& fellow Samarnon

peacefully went home to her Maker
on December 28, 2004
at the age of 92.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz in Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

The family & relatives humbly request the good reader for prayer for the repose of her soul.

Interment will be on
Sunday, January 02, 2005
after Holy Mass
at 8:00 a.m.

WE DESIGN OBITUARY FOR FREE.

"Remember no more the sins of my youth,
remember me only in light of your love.."
Psalm 25:7

In Loving Memory
in the 1st Death Anniversary

Atty. BEN HUR SALCEDO

Former Undersecretary, Dept. of Energy
March 13, 1938 – Dec. 30, 2003

Our deepest gratitude
to Mr. Villavicencio of Flying V
and the staff of the Dept. of Energy.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live
even when he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."

DIONISIO A. BIASON

April 9, 1943 – December 23, 2004

He is survived by his loving wife Lou;
children Albert & Garnet, Alan & Frances, Arnold & Kay;
grandchildren Todee, Erin & Isabel,
sisters Violy & Dodie, brother Nardo;
in-laws, nephews and nieces.

Interment will be held today at Heaven's Gate
Memorial Park I, Cogeo, Antipolo City after the
8 o'clock morning mass at St. Paul of the Cross
Parish Church, SSS Village, Marikina City.

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People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Asiana Airlines cites top travel agencies

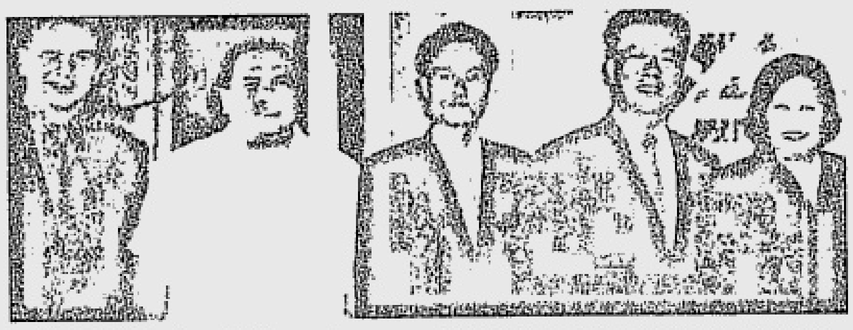
KOREAN national carrier Asiana Airlines (OZ), this year's winner of the Skytrax Airline Excellence Award for Asia, has cited the top travel agencies that have best served the travel needs of Filipino and Korean tourists in a special dinner-dance show.

The airline's close partnership with travel agencies here and in Korea have helped boost the country's tourism growth, said Asiana Airlines regional manager Hyun Il Kim at the event. The awards recognized the travel agencies' contributions to Asiana's performance as it expanded Clark flights to five times weekly and added two time weekly flights to Pusan, South Korea. The Philippines has welcomed an estimated 400,000 Korean tourists this year.

Pampanga-based Clark International Travel Agency (Cita) has even landed among the top five Korean travel agencies in the Asiana Airlines awards. The company had opened offices just a year ago after Asiana began operating Clark flights. Asiana Airlines continues to enjoy strong passenger load factors in both Manila and Clark operations.

Asiana Philippines general manager Rene Banzon paid special tribute to Hall of Fame awardee Travel Saver Inc for consistently winning the Top Travel Agency Award since the rites were celebrated in the 90s. Travel Saver Inc was commended for its support of Asiana Airlines and hard work in promoting Asiana in the Philippines.

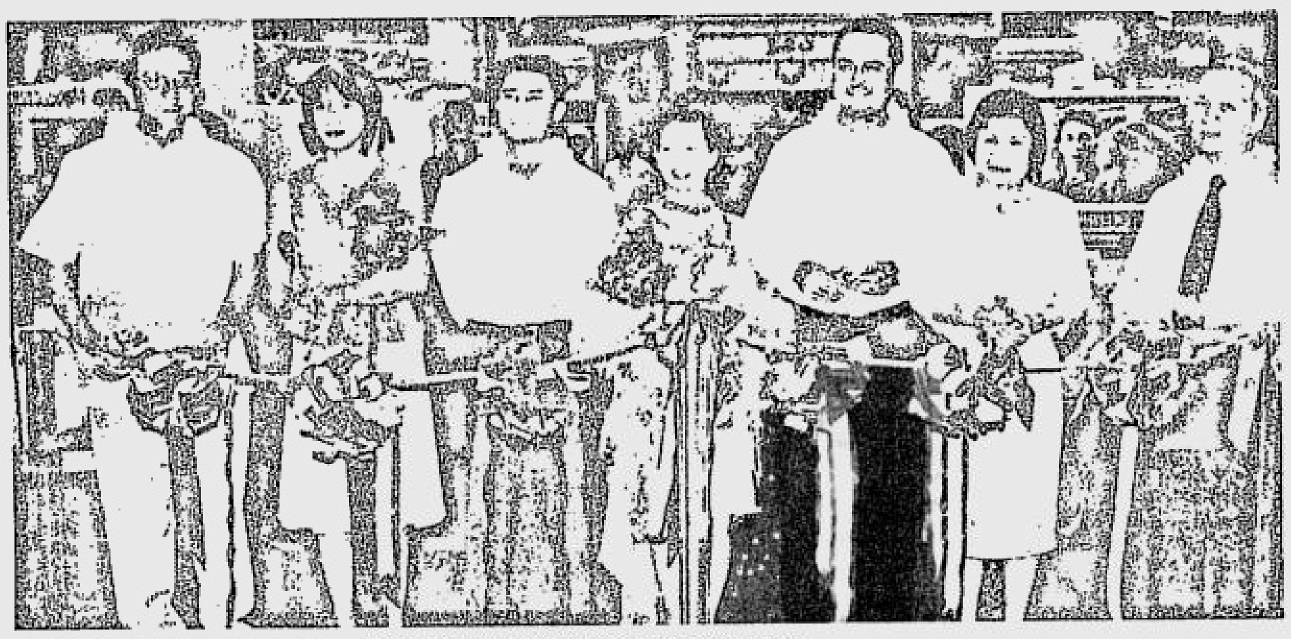
Marsman Tours and Travel Corp won as top Filipino Travel Agency while the top Korean Travel Agency award went to MNK Travel. Other awardees were Uni-Orient Travel Inc, Pioneer Travel, Kim's Travel, Kana Philtour, Yeson Travel & Tours Inc, Pan Pacific Travel Corp, Cita and Getaway Tours.



ASIANA Philippines GM Rene Banzon, Transnational Diversified Group (TDG) Air and Travel Division deputy president Renvi M. Martinez, Asiana Airlines Clark manager Sang Ju Kim, Asiana Airlines regional manager Hyun Il Kim and TDG Air and Travel Division president Gerry de Guzman.

'SOLD OUT' LIVE IN BORACAY

Fresh from its recent successful South East Asian Tour, 'Sold Out' flies to Boracay for a live two-day celebration to bid 2004 farewell on the 30th and to welcome the New Year on the 31st at the beautiful and exotic Pearl of the Pacific Resort. Sold Out, short for 'Servants of the Lord' - whose repertoire includes songs of the Beatles, Carlos Santana, Beach Boys, Rolling Stones, Earth Wind and Fire and many other singers and groups from the early 60's era all the way to the exciting dance music of the 70's and 80's – as well as Original Pilipino Music (OPM) hits – performs in the Couples for Christ Community events and at popular cafes and even posh dining establishments in Metro Manila. The Pearl of the Pacific New Year's Eve festivities will be hosted by former newscaster Charlie Ysmael, who is also one of the band's singers and guitarists. All of the other band members are likewise professionals in their own right. Incidentally, while enjoying the Sold Out Band's unique brand of music, the Pearl of the Pacific's Chef de cuisine entices all to sample a delectable Filipino buffet dinner on the 30th and a Tropical Paradise menu for the New Year's Eve, capped by the traditional countdown and a fantastic fireworks display. So, come and experience its rare culinary expertise while enjoying the music of Sold Out Band's ecstatic music, and welcome the new year 2005 with a bang! For reservations, you may call Pearl of the Pacific Boracay Resort at (036)288–320 or its Manila contact numbers (02)926-0162/924-4480-83/410-8622.



PLASMA PLEASURES AT THE ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Automatic Centre recently launched the first ever Plasma and LCD exhibit in the country. Leading the ceremonies were (from left): Jose Pardo, ABC-5 chair; Agot Isidro, TV personality, singer and actress; Donnie Tantoco, Philippine Retailers Association president; Tessa Prieto Valdes, TV host and columnist; Kenny Quintal, DQA Architects - principal and Tech and Tuner Mag editor; Irene Lim Chua, SEVP, Automatic Centre; and Fritz Server, Home Cable founder.

Waltermart Makati opens its doors

AT THE corner of Pasong Tamo and Pasay Road stands the new Waltermart Makati. This five-storey commercial complex recently had its soft opening, making the bigger and better Waltermart Supermarket, Abenson Appliances, Jollibee, Chowking, Red Ribbon Bakeshop, Taiko Japanese Restaurant of Little Tokyo, Watson's Personal Care Store, and Ideal Vision accessible to the public.

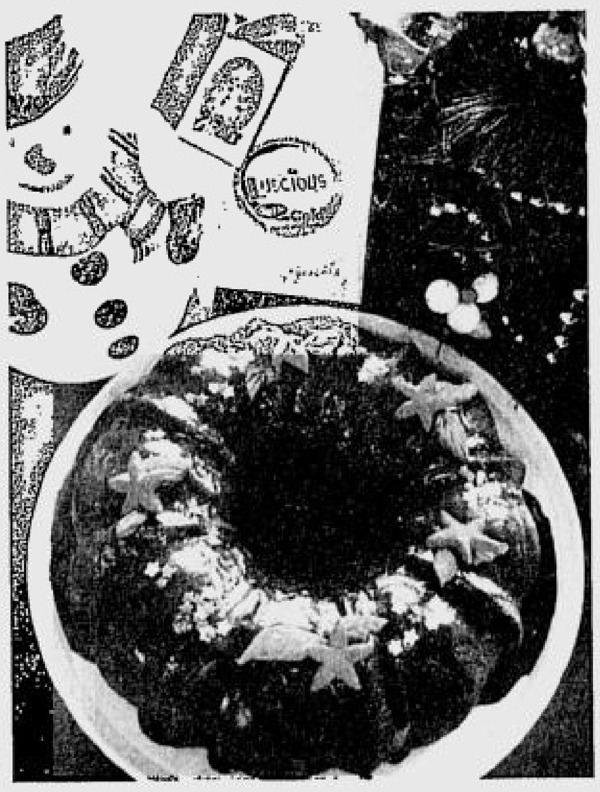
The Makati branch is the 8th Waltermart Community Shopping Center and the new Waltermart Supermarket is the 14th Waltermart Supermarket to date. Its strategic location makes it more convenient for shoppers who live, work and study near the area. So it actually reaches out to this erstwhile unserved segment of this Makati area, saving them the hassle of traffic jams and parking problems. With over 300 parking spaces, parking will never be a problem.

The bigger and better Waltermart Supermarket in Makati has been transformed into a compelling place to shop with family-focused solution centers, extensive fresh food sections, healthy meal solutions, relaxing interiors, and more exciting marketing activities. Their renewed customer service emphasis is embodied by their slogan "Your Family Deserves our Best!" In providing total value shopping, Waltermart Supermarket always strives to give their best not only in terms of over-all customer service as well.

Watch out for the grand openings of Picture City, Kitaro Japanese Restaurant, Skin Perfect Facial Center, Netopia Internet Café, Bibliarch Bookstore, and All Digital Cinemas in Waltermart Makati this December!

Established in 1992, Waltermart is committed to providing a convenient shopping destination and active participation in the social development efforts designed to uplift the quality of life of the local community.

ProductFILES

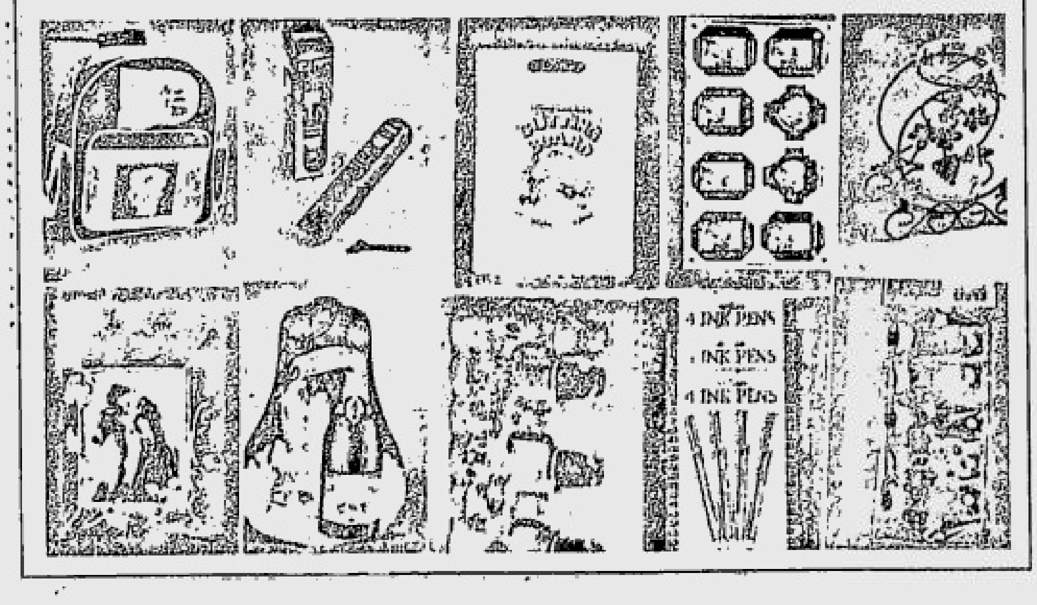


New holiday cake at Kooky & Luscious Greenhills

THE MAGNOLIA Gold Christmas Bundt Cake is a new holiday cake created by Bambi Sy Gobio of Kooky & Luscious. Inspired by the richness of Magnolia Gold Butter, the cake is studded with Roasted Almonds, Belgian Chocolate Chips, Sundried Cherries and Orange Confit. Then it's drenched with Amaretto Brandy syrup and covered with Caramel Sauce and Bittersweet Chocolate Ganache. The large 10 inch bundt cakes are P600 each, and the 4" mini bundtlettes are P100 each. Kooky & Luscious is located at City Center Building, 338 Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills, San Juan. Tel/fax no. 705-1512; mobile (0916)572-7499. Store hours: Sunday to Wednesday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Thursday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to midnight.

All items at P88

PESO 88 recently opened its 2nd branch at the Makati Cinema Square. Photo shows some of the items being offered at the newly opened outlet of the Peso 88 store at the upper ground level of the Makati Cinema Square in Pasong Tamo, Makati City. There are over 500 imported items to choose from ranging from gift and novelty items as well as a variety of goods for home, office, sports and personal use. Peso 88 is also available for franchising. For inquiries, visit its new outlet.



COCOLIFE
FREEDOM TO LIVE LIFE

COCOLIFE, NIA COOPERATIVE INK AGREEMENT

Cocolife and the National Irrigation Administration Cooperative (NIA Coop) recently signed a memorandum of agreement that will provide NIA Coop Members life insurance protection through easy automatic payroll deduction under Cocolife's Salary Savings Insurance (SSI) Program. In photo are: (seated from left) Metro Makati agent Lucena Maon, marketing and franchising head Nikko de Guzman-Ledesma, branch manager Roger Jamora, NIA Coop chair Rolando Galinato, NIA Coop vice chair Gene Ragodon Jr.; (standing from left) Mass Marketing account executive Jennifer Molina, NIA Coop secretary Leonor Fernandez, NIA Coop directors: Helen Lopez, Ofelia Vibas, Aurora Sison, Daniel Tolentino, Efren Rabara, and vice chair for election committee Conrado Carlos.

UAP FOUNDATION LAUNCHES THE IONIC CLUB

The United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) Foundation Inc recently launched 'The Ionic Club' at the Manila Intercontinental Hotel in Makati City. The Ionic Club is a multi-faceted, exclusive membership club designed to forge links, foster business relations and nurture friendship at the wonderful ambiance provided by the club's state of the art facilities and amenities. Indeed, it was a successful night which was graced by some 150 prominent figures and personalities from the building and construction industry, architectural profession and allied professions. Exceeding its targets, the foundation earmarked more than 4 million in initial membership fees and commitments. The event recognized the trustees of the UAP Foundation Inc who worked untiringly for the development of the Ionic Club namely architect Angel Doria (far left), architect Ana Mangalino-Ling representing architect Jose Siao Ling, architect Enrique Olonan, architect Alejandro Cua, architect Prosperidad Luis, architect Yolanda Reyes and architect Robert Sac. The launching is considered as one of the main preludes to the National Architecture Week celebration last Dec. 5 to 11.

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Yahoo! Southeast Asia launches all-new Yahoo! Messenger

YAHOO! the world's number one online media brand and the most trafficked Internet destination with 325 million unique visitors across 26 properties has unveiled the latest version of its highly popular Yahoo! Messenger (http://asia.messenger.yahoo.com/) service in Asia. The all-new Yahoo! Messenger gives consumers a more personal and interactive instant messaging (IM) experience by offering leading Yahoo! services like Yahoo! Games, Yahoo! AddressBook, and Yahoo! Search right in the messaging window, plus expressive features such as Avatars and Audibles.

The most popular features of Yahoo! Messenger offered during the preview period included; AddressBook, Audibles, Avatars and Display Images, demonstrating that Yahoo! Messenger users are already tapping a wide array of expressive features offered. Consistent with users' favorite features from the preview, Yahoo! has added more to the full product:

- Flirt and Taunt with Audibles: IM isn't just text anymore with the introduction of expressive verbal animations. Yahoo! Messenger is more than doubling the Audible selection with 32 new Audibles and a new Insults category to add to the range of expression.

- Press a Button: Send a Photo: Share pictures with friends and family instantaneously by taking advantage of the redesigned Yahoo! Photos IMVironment by clicking on a new button in the IM window. It has never been more fun and simple to share your photos while instant messaging.

- Who do you Want to Be?: People are creating Avatars with numerous combinations of hairstyles, clothing and accessories to express themselves while instant messaging. With the preview service, the most popular Avatar items included city and beach backgrounds, chandelier earrings, pink sunglasses and now new ethnicities, and accessories like a bicycle and a surfboard, are giving users even more choices to express themselves.

- Yahoo! on your mobile phone: You can send text messages directly from Yahoo! Messenger to your friends' mobile phones in the Philippines by clicking on the "Text" mobile phone icon or entering your friends' mobile numbers in your Address Book. With Messenger for SMS, users can keep using Yahoo! Messenger even when away from the PC by sending "in [yahoo!ID] [yahoo!password]" to 2258 for Globe users. A small nominal fee is chargeable for messages sent via a mobile phone. More details are available at (http://asia.messenger.yahoo.com/allnew/mobile.html)

Says, Niren Hiro, general manager of Yahoo! Southeast Asia and Singapore, "Each day, tens of millions of users worldwide tap on Yahoo! Messenger and Messenger for SMS to communicate. The beauty of Yahoo! Messenger and Messenger for SMS lies in users' ability to stay connected anywhere anytime, with friends while on the go via their mobile phone even when not connected to a PC."

CHIEF JUSTICE DAVIDE CITED BY UE

University of the East offices led by P.E. Domingo, chair/CEO, recently paid a courtesy call on Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide to thank him for the launching of the annual Chief Justice Davide Jurisprudential Forum at the UE College of Law. Davide and the Court associate justices will deliver 'legal refinements' of significant court rulings important to judiciary members and the law profession, participants in the mandatory continuing legal education program and bar examinees. A first in the history of legal education in this country, the forum will be started next January and February at the UE College of Law. Shown with Davide (center) during the courtesy call are P.O. Domingo and UE Law dean Antonio Tupaz (second and fourth from left). Others are Dr. Jesus Tanchangco (leftmost), president, UE Foundation for Research and Advanced Studies Inc and Ismael Khan Jr. (rightmost), Supreme Court assistant court administrator and chief of the public information office.

PARTNERS' FAIR 2004

United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative Deborah Landey (second form right) joins with Royal Netherlands Forest and Environment First Secretary Jan Willem Cools (third from right) in inaugurating "Partners' Fair 2004: Knowledge Management Sharing of Best Practices and Lessons Learned." The fair was held recently at the U.P. Diliman Bahay ng Alumni.

Johnson & Johnson, PPS launch Medical Home Initiatives

THE FILIPINO child carries in his hand the banner and future of the nation. As such every child deserves utmost care to ensure his health, growth and development. Who he/she will become in the coming years will shape the history of our country.

Realizing the important role of Filipino children, the Philippine Pediatric Society Inc (PPS), together with Johnson & Johnson Philippines (J&J) recently launched a programme dubbed as Medical Home Initiatives.

Aptly themed "Kalusugan ng Kabataan: Ating Kinabukasan", the PPS Medical Home Initiatives is a family-centered, community based partnership approach to providing high quality healthcare services that are accessible, affordable, comprehensive, and culturally effective.

"Every child should be given the chance to fully maximize his potentials. Optimum health and holistic care is a must for the Filipino youth to be able to grow strong, active and physically as well as mentally fit," says Allan Ancheta, senior professional marketing manager of J&J. With this premise, J&J joins forces with PPS in facilitating access to healthcare for children aged 0 to 19 years old.

The core concept of Medical Home Initiatives is to accredit as medical home health centers strategically located in accessible venues. These can be realized in Early Childhood Care and Development Units (ECCD) - rural health units, school-based clinics, hospital outpatient clinics, physician offices, community and homes of families. It will be manned by a pool of child health professionals in partnership with community volunteers and family members who are well trained and guided by physician or pediatricians who act as the captain of the team. For its part, J&J provides the assistance needed to carry out the task of promoting PPS Medical Home Initiatives.

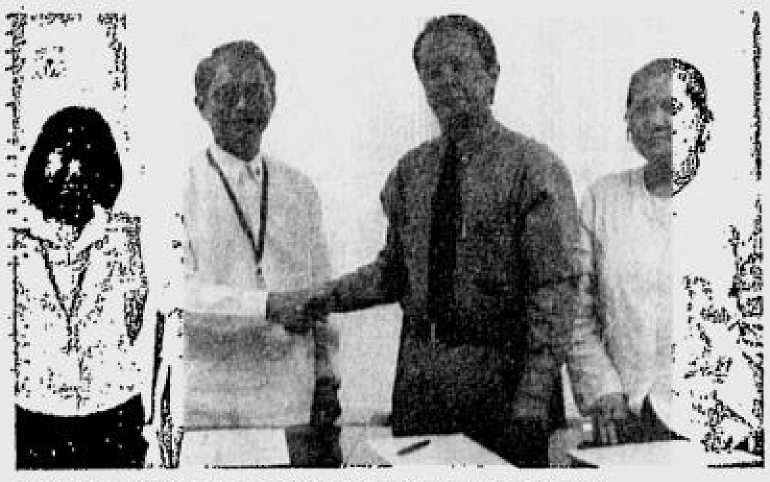
PPS president Dr. Estrella B. Paje-Villar explains "Through the Medical Home Initiatives, families will be closely linked to existing community resources and are assured of social support from PPS, J&J and other sectors of the community. Family health information gathered will help PPS and other concerned health institutions evaluate existing health conditions and draft holistic healthcare schemes for the Filipino children, families, and communities."

Other agencies supporting the Medical Home Initiatives include families and indigenous volunteers, government offices, the Council for the Welfare of Children, the Dept. of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Education and other socio-civic and philanthropic organizations.

This decade when the country's future appear bleak, cause-oriented projects like the Medical Home Initiatives give children and families a sense of hope and empowerment. This is why J&J is totally committed to this programme. In the past, J&J and the PPS have often teamed up to uplift the quality of pediatric healthcare and advocate child welfare because both envision a healthy and bright tomorrow for the Filipino children.

AB COMM PRESENTS CMMA AWARD TO RCM

Tom Banguis Jr., president of AB Communications Inc, presents the 2004 Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) for Best Public Service Print Ad to Alex Yap, president of the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM). The CMMA award was for the print ad 'Damaged Goods' which highlights the plight of special children in the country - one of a number of special projects which the RCM continually supports. Also in the picture are (from left) Renato Ampil, immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Manila, Alex Yap, Tom Banguis, and Bing Beltran, vice president for creative services, AB Communications Inc.



1521 REC TO MARKET CRISTINA HOMES 2

1521 Real Estate Corp was recently awarded as the exclusive marketing arm for Cristina Homes 2, a housing project of Royal Ventures Dev't Corp using the Royal Building System, a Canadian technology in Salawag Dasmariñas, Cavite. Shown at the signing rites are (from left); Christine Abalgar, senior marketing officer of Royal Ventures Dev't Corp; Jose Adadesco, president of Royal Ventures Dev't Corp; Bon Reyes, president of 1521 Real Estate Corp; and Salvaxio Carin, VP for sales and marketing, 1521 Real Estate Corp.

DHL wins 2 citations in Asia Logistics Awards 2004

DHL, the world's leading express and logistics company, was honored with two highly coveted awards - Express and Mail Operator of the year and Air Freight Forwarder of the year, at the Asia Logistics Awards 2004 recently held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is the third consecutive year that DHL Express has been awarded the Express and Mail Operator Award and the second time DHL Danzas Air and Ocean (DDAO), the air and ocean freight arm of DHL, has won the Air Freight Forwarder of the Year Award. Charles Kaufmann vice president for Air Freight, DHL Danzas Air & Ocean - Asia Pacific, and Charles Brewer, DHL Express general manager - Malaysia, received the awards on behalf of DHL Asia Pacific.

DHL Express clinched the award - owing to its service reliability and efficiency, as well as its understanding of Asia Pacific in a well connected global and Asian Air network. DHL Express' dedicated Asian Air Network comprises 25 destinations in 16 countries across the region, served by 20 dedicated aircraft, in addition to some 800 commercial flights utilized daily.

Commenting on the wins, John Mullen, chief executive officer for DHL Express Americas, Asia Pacific and Emerging Markets said, "This year's wins certainly motivate us to remain the benchmark for the industry. By offering a full suite of products and services across all points of the supply chain from a single source, we are well positioned to serve the growing Intra-Asia trade. We' will strive to continually better our achievements and enhance our service quality so as to be the preferred choice of our customers."

DHL Danzas Air & Ocean outperformed competitors and received the Air Freight Forwarder of the Year Award, which reinforces its global leadership position in airfreight.

"We are pleased to gain recognition from the logistics industry once again for conferring us with such prestigious awards. DHL's global presence and leadership, coupled with in-depth understanding of local markets, are keys to maintaining our competitive edge in providing customers unparalleled reliability and best-in-class service quality," said Peter Landsiedel, chief executive officer - Asia Pacific, DHL Danzas Air & Ocean.

According to Alan Cassels, country manager for DHL Express Philippines, "This recognition can be attributed to DHL's extensive investments and intensive business building efforts across the region. In the Philippines, we have partnered well with both, key industry role players and government agencies, to better serve our customers by anticipating their business needs. We have invested in state-of-the-art technology that enabled us to offer security solutions for our customer, receiving Asia Category "A" certification from the Technology Asset Protection Association (Tapa). These facilities include the Calabarzon Service Center, Makati Service Center, and the Manila Gateway." DHL has invested US$1.15 billion to expand and enhance its infrastructure, technology and network in Asia Pacific, underscoring the company's commitment to its business in the region.

Zone A-B, Asian Deve nt Bank
Manila, Philippin
Bogot

'SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SYSTEMS' WORKSHOP

'A civilized city is not that one with highways but rather, one where a child on a bicycle can safely go anywhere', said former mayor and architect of the transport revolution in Bogota, Columbia, Enrique Peñalosa during his talk on 'Sustainable Transport Systems' in a workshop co-sponsored by Shell companies in the Philippines with the Asian Development Bank, held at the ADB Auditorium in Mandaluyong City last Dec. 1. Peñalosa is an accomplished public official who served as Mayor of Bogota, Colombia from 1998-2001 where he led a profound city transformation through several successful sustainable projects such as transport modernization, community development, construction of public libraries and a successful park development program in the city of Bogota. Shown are (from left): Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa) president Claire dela Fuente, Enrique Peñalosa, LTFRB chair Len Bautista, and SciP country chair Edgar Chua during the workshop.

MY SPECIAL VALENTINE DRAW

DTI Director Arnaldo del Rosario (second from left) poses with Ana Mae Dichoso, Malyn Basmayor and Tess Reyes of National Bookstore during the grand draw of 'Nokia 3650 Raffle Promo' held recently by Bookware Publishing Corp. For the readers of My Special Valentine and MSV Classics Illustrated pocketbooks, its lucky winner is Marica Geraringa of Marikina City. The promo has been extended up to December of this year where a Nokia 6600 is to be won. For inquiries, call 631-8894.

Agency formed to monitor GOCC debt

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has formed a debt and risk management task force that will monitor the borrowings of state-owned companies, especially those deemed financially troubled, to reduce the risk exposure of the cash-starved national government.

This developed in the wake of the continued burgeoning of the public sector's debts, which was blamed largely on the poor fiscal performance of government-owned and –controlled corporations (GOCCs).

With the task force in place, the national government hopes to instill fiscal discipline among GOCCs and government financial institutions (GFIs) to prevent them from unnecessarily bloating the already huge public sector debt.

The debt level, inclusive of the borrowings of state-owned companies and the national government, was placed at P5.9 trillion as of end-2003. Of the amount, over P3 trillion was accounted for by the national government and the balance by the GOCCs. Over 20 percent of the national government's debt represented the liabilities of GOCCs that the government assumed.

According to Finance Undersecretary Nieves Osorio, the task force will thoroughly review the amount of guarantees provided by the state to GOCCs and GFIs, and determine whether the parameters followed by national government in extending the guarantees were too liberal.

"The task force will also look at the fiscal policies observed by state-owned companies," Osorio said in an interview.

As stated under the recently issued Department Order No. 33-04, the task force would be led by Finance Undersecretary Eric Recto as chair, with National Treasurer Nina Lasala and Osorio to serve as members. The task force will also be composed of technical staff from the DOF.

Osorio said the Debt and Risk Management task force had done preparatory works and would start full operations in January.

According to its draft mandate, the Debt and Risk Management task force will also be responsible for the establishment of a monitoring system, including templates for financial reports and analytical tools.

It will also develop a system to quantify and manage the government's risk in guaranteeing liabilities of GOCCs. This function includes setting up of procedures for sharing of data related to GOCC assets and liabilities by the Bureau of Treasury, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Department of Budget and Management.

The disclosure of the huge debts of GOCCs—including National Power Corp., Light Rail Transit Authority and National Food Authority—during recent congressional hearings on the government's fiscal program prompted legislators to call for an inquiry on the manner the finances of state-owned companies were handled by their officials.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. asked Malacañang to sack heads of debt-saddled GOCCs for alleged mismanagement. He noted that Napocor's debts stand at P1.4 trillion, while that of the LRTA was about P25 billion.

The DOF and the Department of Budget and Management had started reviewing the financial performance of several GOCCs, with the plan of dissolving those which the government can afford to lose, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin earlier said.

But Osorio, who is in charge of supervising GOCCs, said the plan might not really be to dissolve but to "rationalize" the functions of the GOCCs. She declined to name the GOCCs that were lined up for rationalization, saying the DOF and the DBM were still reviewing the process.

Land management project OKd

THE CABINET-LEVEL Investment Coordination Committee of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda-ICC) has approved a P2.234-billion project that would enhance the government's technological capacity to administer lands.

Called the Land Administration and Management Project II (LAMP II), the project will address land-related problems, such as confusion over rightful owners and the tedious processing of land-title transfers.

This will be done through the integration of the database of various government agencies, including Land Registration Authority, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Transportation and Communication and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, among others.

According to Jonathan Uy head of Neda's public investment staff, an integrated database will fulfill various objectives, including hastening the processing of land transfers from one owner to another.

"This project is expected to improve the country's investment potential as it will address the concern of many businessmen over delays in the processing of land titles," he said in a telephone interview.

Uy also said that consolidating the database of government agencies would help prevent instances when two parties, holding different ownership documents coming from different agencies, are both claiming to be owners of a single piece of land.

As espoused in the 2004-2010 Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), the project aims to ensure the integrity of the land titling system to promote the development of a mortgage market for lands and prevent illegal titling.

Uy added that the project would clarify boundaries and identities of zones, such as whether they are industrial, residential, or agricultural.

The Neda official further explained that the project would also give security to farmers who have been beneficiaries of land under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). With the project, farmers will be more secure that the land given to them will not be claimed by any other person or entity in the future.

According to Neda Director General Romulo Neri, the project, aside from developing the government's database, will also include a study on the property rights of farmers and their families in the uplands.

Should the results of the study become favorable to farmers, Neri said, then it would boost the Arroyo administration's medium-term agenda of developing 2 million hectares of land for agricultural businesses.

Michelle V. Remo

DTI extends safeguard duty on ceramic tiles

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has ordered the extension by three years of the safeguard duty on imported ceramic floor and wall tiles especially those imported from China.

In an order dated Dec. 21, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the definitive safeguard measure would, however, be lowered by 20 percent to P2.80 a kilogram.

A previous order, which will expire on Jan. 11, set the additional duty at P3.50 a kilo.

The amount would be subject to a yearly review for possible adjustment.

Similar to dumping and countervailing measures, a safeguard duty is one of the trade protection measures allowed by the World Trade Organization.

A requirement for the imposition of safeguard measures is a proof that importation of the product concerned would cause the local industry serious injury.

The decision was made in response to a petition from the Ceramic Tile Manufacturers Association.

The Tariff Commission investigated the complaint and came out with a report on Oct. 26. In this report, the commission said that without a safeguard duty, domestic selling prices would fall below levels not enough to recover the cost to produce and sell.

"Many exporting countries in the Asian region, especially China, continue to increase their production capacities to tap the export market," the TC said.

Under the DTI order, however, imports from Japan and the European Union are exempt from the safeguard duty since their ceramic tiles "could not be considered 'like product or directly competitive product.'"

Also, the measure would not be applied to imports from a developing country if its share to total Philippines ceramic tile imports was less than 3 percent.

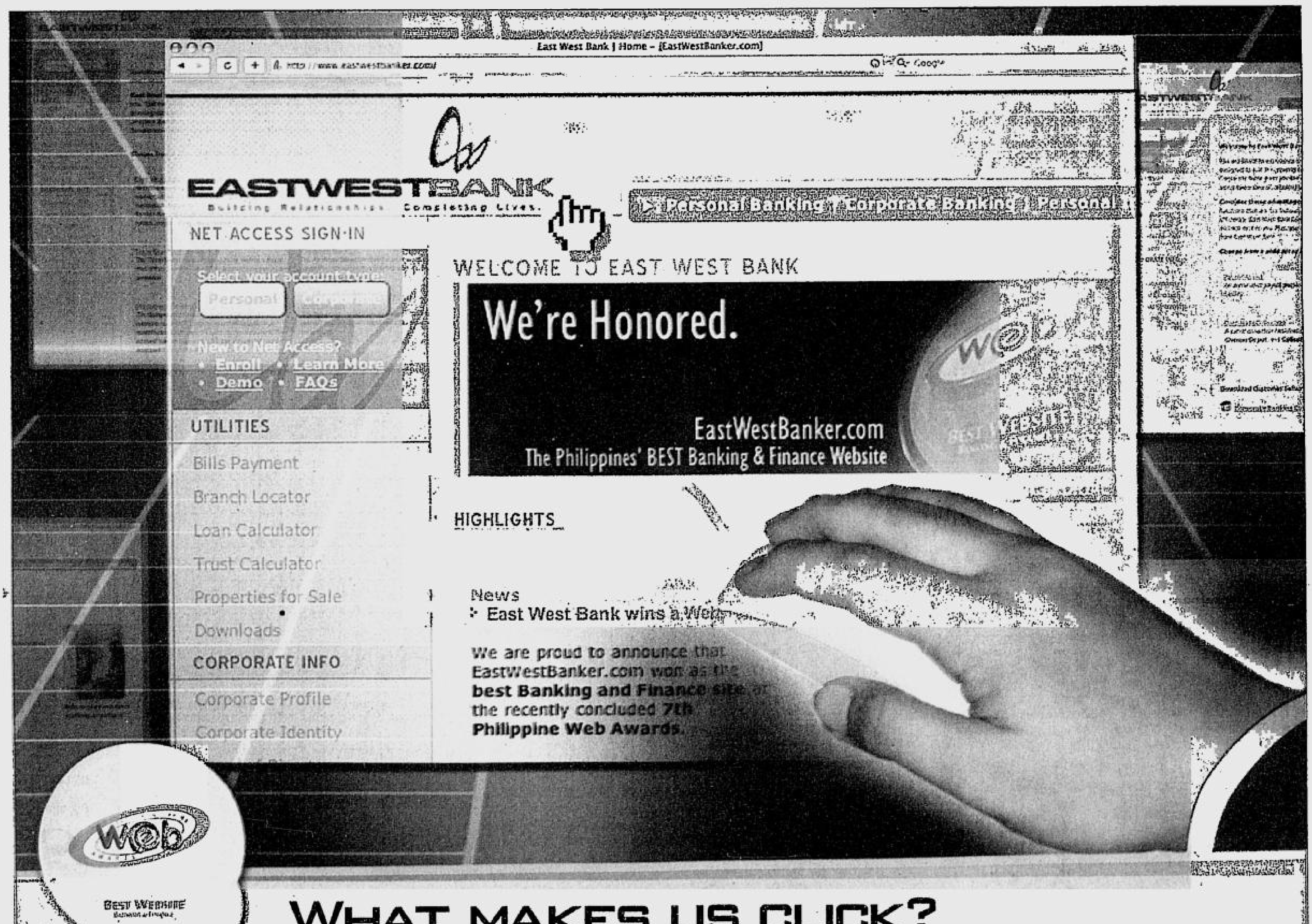
Purisima said the safeguard measure was a time-bound tool.

"Industries should speed up their transformation to meet the challenges of the international market," he said.

"They cannot always rely on the measure to shield themselves against imports," he added.

Under the Safeguard Measures Act and the agreements under the World Trade Organization, developing countries can avail themselves of such duties for a maximum of 10 years.

The safeguard duty on ceramic tiles was first imposed on Jan. 9, 2002 at P5.40 a kilo. This was reduced to P4.30 a kilo the following year up to Jan. 10, 2004, and P3.50 a kilo up to Jan. 10, 2005.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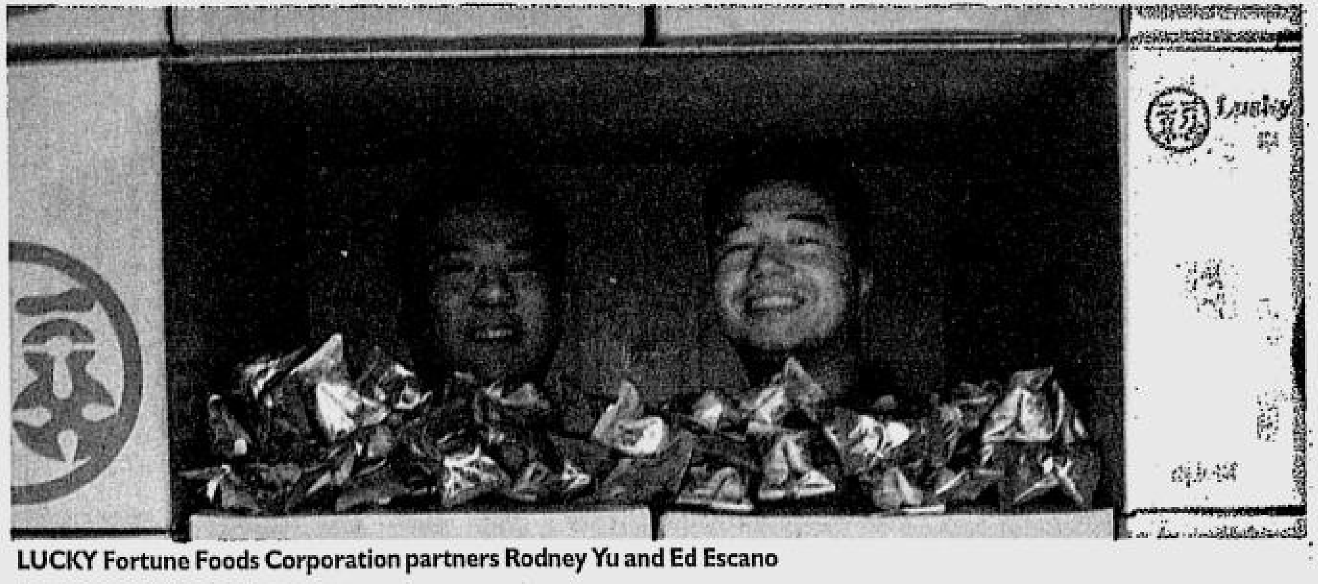

LUCKY Fortune Foods Corporation partners Rodney Yu and Ed Escano

Your fortune in a cookie

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

THE NEW Year always comes with wishes of health, wealth and good cheer. 2005 should be no exception. Ed Escano, a lawyer by profession, decided to bring all this to us by means of a cookie.

The history of the fortune cookie dates back to the time when China was occupied by the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries. In those days, moon cakes filled with lotus paste were being distributed by Chu Yuan Chang, a revolutionary patriot who disguised himself as a Taoist priest.

It was said the Mongols did not particularly like lotus paste so revolutionaries thought it safe to tuck secret messages, like the date of the uprising against the invaders, inside the moon cakes. A popular "myth" is that the Ming Dynasty owed its reign to the moon cake.

The transition from moon cakes to fortune cookies supposedly arose out of necessity in the hard days of the the railway boom, when the Chinese 69ers were building the great American railways through the Sierra Nevada to California. Workers put happy messages inside biscuits that they exchanged during the moon festival instead of cakes.

The biscuit became the fortune cookie we know today. ("Chinatown—History of Food/Fortune Cookie")

I sat down with Ed a few weeks ago and just had to ask: Why fortune cookies? His reply: "The (idea) of making fortune cookies came to mind after regularly watching the Food Network. I have been thinking of (starting) a business related to food.

"When I saw an episode on fortune cookies, I asked my friend Rodney if he would be interested to (go into) the business with me. Fortunately, he said yes. At a time when our economy is struggling, Filipinos need to be perked up. I believe that fortune cookies and the messages they contain are a good way to inspire people."

And, like a true-blue lawyer, he explained what made his fortune cookie different from the rest. "Lucky Fortune Foods Corporation is the first and only manufacturer of fortune cookies in the Philippines using fully automated and patented machines. For this, we constructed a new plant to comply with the standards for clean and hygienic production.

"Only the finest ingredients are used and we have gone as far as investing in a water purifying system, using filtration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet treatment, so only clean water goes into our batter.

"They (cookies) are produced in fully automated baking machines and the fortune messages, printed using food grade ink, are automatically loaded before the (cookies) are machine-folded. Since ours are machine-made, consistency in size, quality and taste is guaranteed.

"The cookies need to be warm when folded so manual production requires a great amount of labor, which drives up the price. But ours are machine-folded and requires one operator for the whole baking process."

With that kind of defense, you have won the case! Good luck to you, Ed! To us who will crack open a cookie or two, may all our wishes come true! Call 6378857 or 6830553.

'Lazy' chef

I'm a chef, too lazy to cook and bake for the holidays, too tired. Where can I get delicious cakes for the holidays?

TG

Are you sure you're not Reggie Aspiras? Kidding! I understand your predicament. When I'm lazy to bake, I call Judah Liu for the most delicious cakes that everyone—and I

YOUR FORTUNE/ C3

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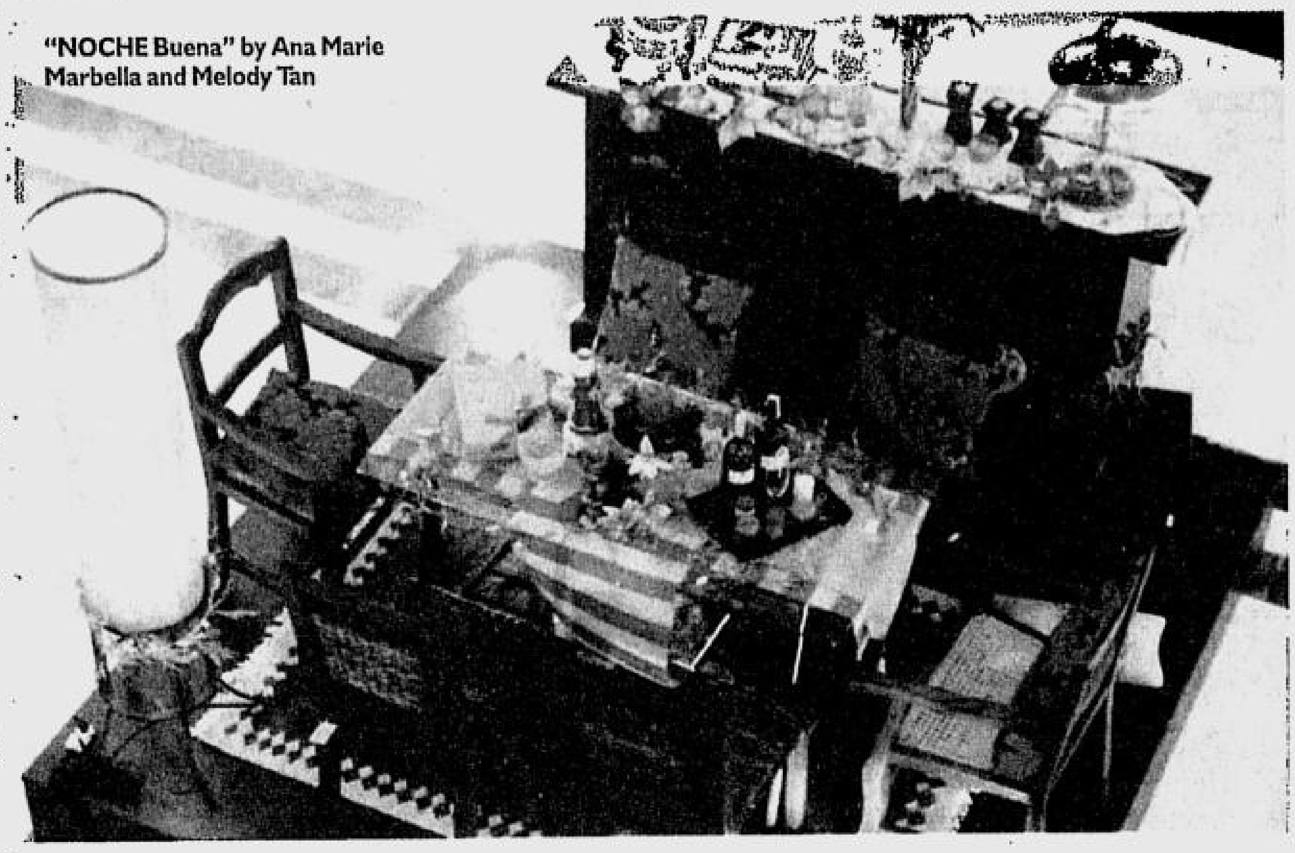
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.3547 Series of 2004



"NOCHE Buena" by Ana Marie Marbella and Melody Tan

Festive tables for the holidays

THE AYALA Center and Philippine School of Interior Design (PSID) unveiled the "A Home for the Holidays" exhibit at the Glorietta 4 and Homezone lobbies.

The exhibition is a nod to the tradition of family togetherness during the holidays.

"Solemnis Sarcalogos" by the PSID trio of Diwi Cruz, Joan Castro and Jing Catriz is a semi-formal dining setting for two. It combines traditional Christmas adornments of Santas and candles with contemporary home pieces of crystals and gems.

In "A Holiday Treat," Diane Cotioco and Dorothy Yap make a heartwarming holiday home out of a compact condo unit. It incorporates the Pinoy holiday highlights of the Noche Buena in a neutral palette of furnishings and fittings with some blues, oranges and golds.

Cookie Bombias, Carlo Mecates and Rae Venturanza, for their "A Crystal Calm," mix lights, luxury and lounging for a holiday setting meant for relaxation and recreation. On the other hand, "Christmas for Grandma" by Cigi Trajano, Bianca Maloles and Dianne Tumale opts for a vintage look with rocking chairs and siesta fans, with pillows and sarong thrown in.

Strawberry Sisperez, Lizelle Yang and Michiko Tiolengko create a Filipino bar and seating area made to match champagne and queso de bola using kamagong and molave.

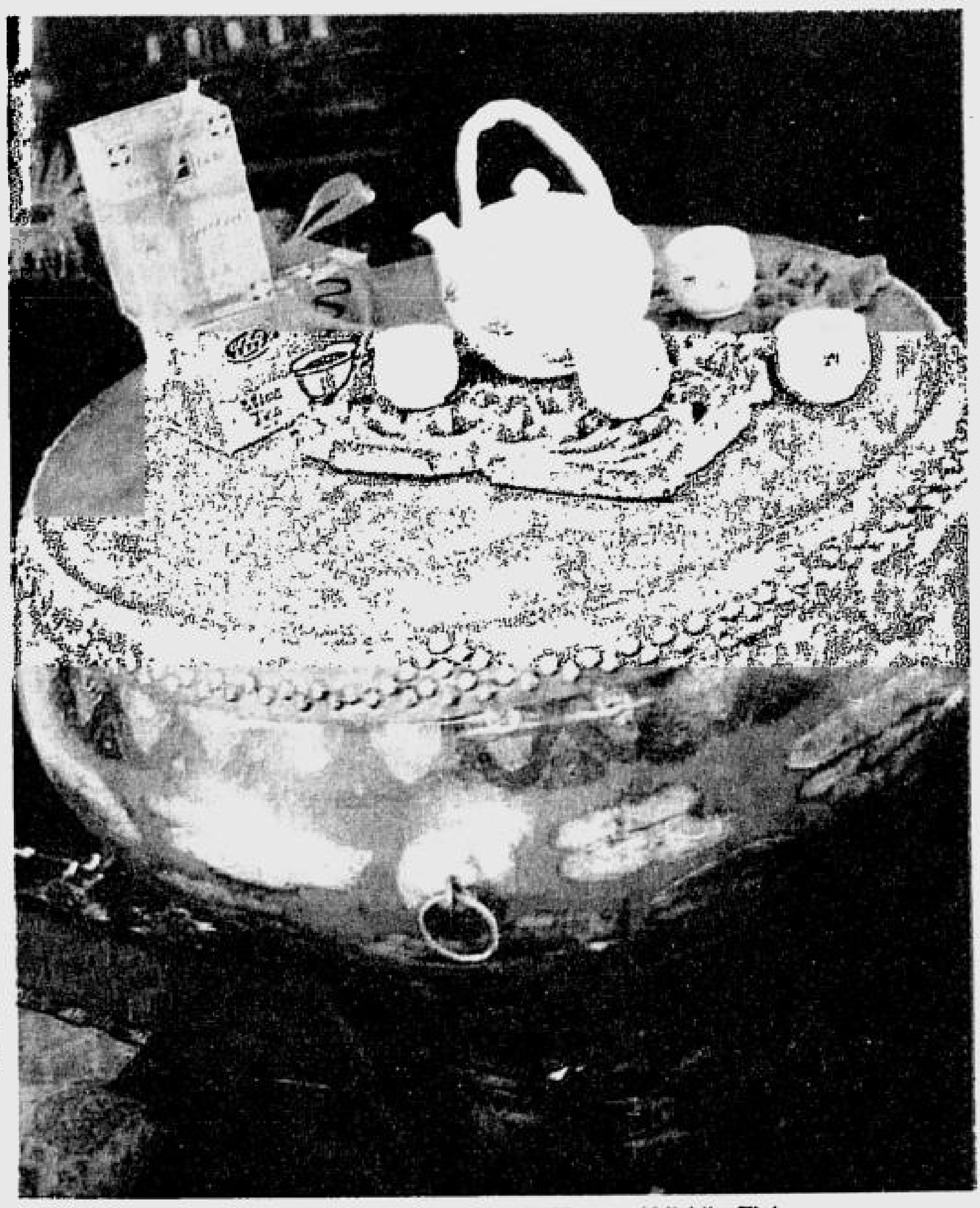
Ann Dee, Joliot Ong and Jamieson Tan use lampposts and benches to create a theatrical look for an alcove. The trio has a minimalist recreation of the Nativity scene sans colors and using interesting odds and bits of modern furnishing.

Ana Marie Marbella and Melody Tan try to capture the colors and moods of the festive Noche Buena with touches of red, green and gold while the group of Bombias, Cotioco, Mecate, Venturanza and Yap wraps another room like a Christmas present: shiny, new and full of class.

Catch the "A Home for the Holidays" exhibit at the G/F of Glorietta 4 and the Homezone Lobby until Dec. 31.

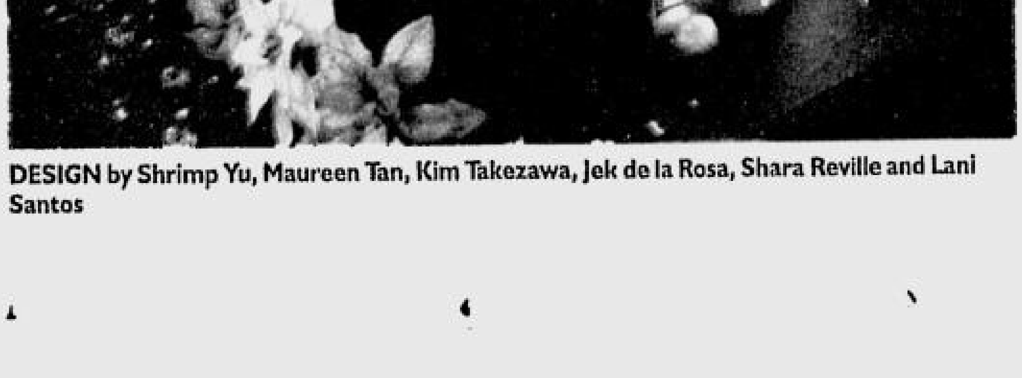
"SOLEMNIS Sarcalogos" by Diwi Cruz, Joan Castro and Jing Catriz

"A CRYSTAL Calm" (with detail at right), by Cookie Bombias, Carlo Mecate and Rae Venturanza

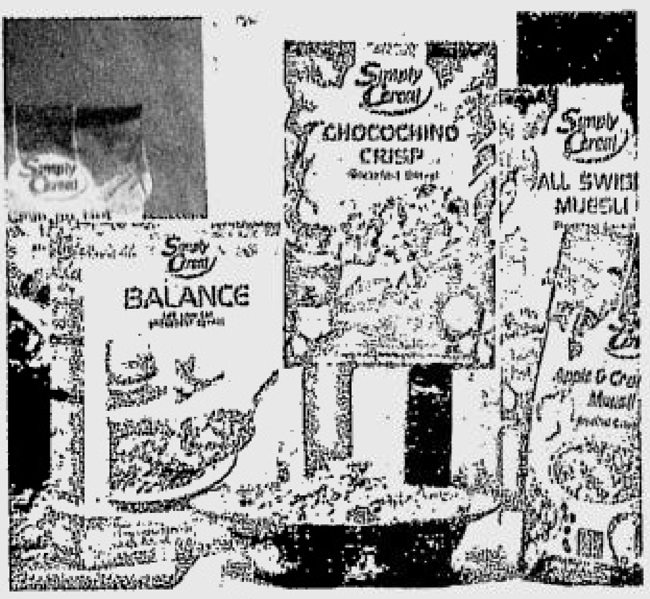


BAR/SEATING area by Strawberry Sisperez, Lizelle Yang and Michiko Tiolengco

"A HOLIDAY Treat" by Diane Cotioco and Dorothy Yap



DESIGN by Shrimp Yu, Maureen Tan, Kim Takezawa, Jek de la Rosa, Shara Reville and Lani Santos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CEREALS FEED YOUR MIND AND BODY

Simply Cereal Muesli packs in the benefits of wheat, oats, fruits and nuts. Its varieties include Caribbean Crisp, Honey and Almond Crisp, Chocochino Crisp, Strawberry Crisp, Balance, All Swiss Muesli, Crunchy Nut Muesli, Multigrain Muesli and Apple and Cranberry Muesli. Simple Cereal products are available at leading supermarkets nationwide.

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Surprise your family and friends with goodies from Billy King's delicatessen at Camp John Hay Manor. There are ube bread, raisin bread, ham and cheese bread, ensaymada, cinnamon bread, cheese rolls, choco chip cookies, choco crinkles, butter cookies, and ciabatta bread. Call (074) 4460231 ext. 1012.

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Colavita is a pasta brand recognized in Italy as one of the finest. Introduced in 1912, pasta selections bearing the Colavita brand name are products of bountiful wheat fields in Molise and the rich farming tradition of the Colavita family. To attest to Colavita's premium quality, the Italian government through the Cerment organization granted Colavita the much-coveted right to declare "Certified Product of Italy" on its labels. Colavita uses only the finest durum wheat semolina, the secret why the pasta stays firm and in shape even after cooking. Distributed by Benby Enterprises, Colavita is now available in leading supermarkets nationwide.

DAK
DAK
Chopped Ham
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FAVORITE HOLIDAY TREAT

Dak offers ready-to-eat hams, luncheon meat, potted meat, sausages, salami and other canned goods. A quality product from Denmark, Dak utilizes the Old World art of seasoning and curing meat to create superb canned meats, each passing the strictest quality control standards. Dak canned meats do not require refrigeration before opening, making them ideal for meals any time, anywhere. Dak is exclusively distributed by Benby Enterprises and sold in leading supermarkets nationwide.

Earth Flavors
Garlic Chips
Earth Flavors
Crunchy Garlic
Earth Flavors
Crispy Onions

GOODNESS OF NATURAL CONDIMENTS

Earth Flavors offers Crunchy Garlic in regular, spicy and salt-free variants; Crispy Onions in natural and spicy variants; Garlic Chips, Fresh Chopped Garlic in vegetable oil and water variants; Chili Garlic Sauce in sweet and hot variants; and Chili Garlic in oil in sweet and hot variants. Earth Flavors products also come in institutional packing sizes, export ready cartons and Christmas baskets. Call 4109526/ 4133878/ 7008210.

MONSTER TREAT

ACT II Microwave Popcorn is made of quality corn kernels seasoned with delightful flavors. Its microwaveable packaging keeps the popcorn fresh and easy to prepare, any time of the day. Relive the story of Shrek with these exciting premiums from Act II. Get a free ogre-sized limited edition popcorn bowl in specially packed Act II 10 count. Sticker-happy kids will love the Shrek static clings, free with every box of Act II 3 count. These clings can be easily removed and transferred again and again and are available in four Shrek designs. Act II Microwave Popcorn is exclusively distributed by Benby Enterprises and sold in leading supermarkets nationwide.

Your fortune in a cookie

From page C1

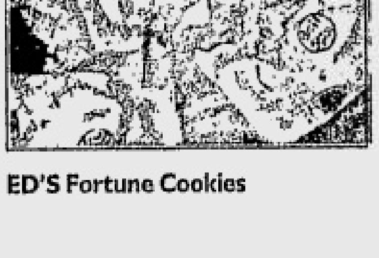
mean *everyone*—loves! My favorites: Pandan, Mocha, Caramel, Marshmallow, Honey Cake. They're the best! Cheap and delicious! Call 8966872.

No cream fruit salad

I prepare fruit salad all the time for the Christmas season. I like to stay away from cream and condensed milk—fattening and too boring.

MARGIE CRUZ

6 cups mixed fruits, balled or sliced (apples, kiwi, pears, peaches, oranges, bananas, melon, mango, watermelon, grapes, berries, etc.)
¼ c orange liquor (Grand Marnier, Luxardo, Cointreau)
simple syrup (boil 2 c sugar with 3 c water and cool)
zest of 2 oranges



ED'S Fortune Cookies

¼ c fresh mint, optional

Combine ingredients together and let macerate at least three hours in the refrigerator. Serve cold, garnish with mint.

Chestnuts for a good cause

Enjoy delicious pre-roasted Mandarin chestnuts year round. They can go from your refrigerator to the toaster oven in a jiffy. Good Brother sells the Mandarin chestnuts which are smaller but sweeter, tastier and easier to peel. Proceeds from the sale will help Gabay at Buhay Foundation. Call 6332058 or 6332059.

Before I shut my computer down for the year, I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2005! Thank you for being a part of Kitchen Rescue!

My New Year wish... that the practice of hanging grapes at the door will stop. Nothing could be more disgusting than a moldy bunch of grapes hanging over your head!

My next wish, of course, is world peace!

A toast to the coming year and to the year that was, to family, friends, good food, happy life, to living, loving and learning... Cheers!

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

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1. JAN. 03 - 07 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - MASTER COURSE IN CAKE DECORATING - P10,500. Learn the practical & easy method of making icing flowers, borders, scrolls & strings, cake designing, sugar molding, color flow, color technique, wedding cake assembly
NEXT SCHED : JAN. 31 - FEB. 04, 2005
2. JAN. 08 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - MUFFINS-MUFFINS - P3,000. Cinnamon- Crunch Sweet Potato, Onion & Shallots, Country Apple Sauce, Choco Chip, Carrot Nut, Banana Walnut Muffins.
NEXT SCHED: FEB 05, 2005
3. JAN. 10 - 13 '05 //8:00AM - 5:00PM - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD - P10,500.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 07 - 10, 2005
4. JAN. 12 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT - P4,500. Using lace mats, New Rolling Pin w/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons,Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilting.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 09, 2005
5. JAN. 15 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE BAKING 1 - P3,000 Banana, Apple Almond, Bars, Carrot Cake, Choco Nut Cake, Whole Wheat Bread, Raisin Bread.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 12, 2005
6. JAN. 17 - 20 '05 // 8:00AM -5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - P12,500 (inclusive of all ingredients) 30 recipes of basic cakes, breads, rolls, pies, pastries & cookies.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 14 - 17, 2005
7. JAN. 17 - 21 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES WITH PORCELAIN RECIPE - P4,500.
(Each set is lesson covered for one day)
a) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-waling,
b) Rose, Cattleya, Cymbidium;
c) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies;
d) Open Rose, Hydrangeas, Grapes
e) Mask or Maskara - a design of your choice
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 14 - 18, 2005
8. JAN. 12 - 14 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - COLD PORCELAIN DOLLS 4 - DAY COURSE - P11,500. Make everlasting dolls using the latest technique in Cold Porcelain.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 09 - 11, 2005
9. JAN. 22 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - FESTIVE COOKIES - P3,000. Choco Rounds, Spiced Fruits & Nuts, Banana, Pecan, Carrot Choco, Apple, & Oatmeal Cookies.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 19, 2005
10. JAN. 24 - 28 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:30PM - SPECIAL BAKING - P13,500. Learn to make 30 Kinds of special cakes from around the world Each cake has a different icing & decoration.
NEXT SCHED: FE4B. 21 - 25 '05
11. JAN. 29 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE 2 - P2,500. Brownie Supreme, Choco Chiffon, Orange Chiffon, Banana Pecan, Cookies, Spiced Raisin Cookies, Chewy Golden Cookies. Baking for Diabetics
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 26, 2005
12. JAN. 21 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - TAPAS - P3,000. Spanish Omelette, Fish Pastries, Potato & Ham Croquettes, Pescado frito, Albondigas, Ensalada de Pollo & Mallocan Pizza
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 18, 2005
13. JAN. 28 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - EDIBLE GELATIN FLOWERS W/O SUGAR - P2,000.
NEXT SCHED: FEB. 25, 2005

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"THE PHILIPPINE FLOWERS IN SUGAR & CELEBRATION BOOK 1,"
"CAKE TOPS WITH PHILIPPINE FLAIR BOOK 2,""
CAKE COLLECTION BOOK 3,"
"A GOLDEN CELEBRETION IN COLD PORCELAIN BOOK 4,"
KITCHEN AID COLORED ELEC MIXER, DEHUMIDIFIER, FOOD PROCESSOR, 2005 WILTON BOOK (LIMITED STOCKS ONLY)

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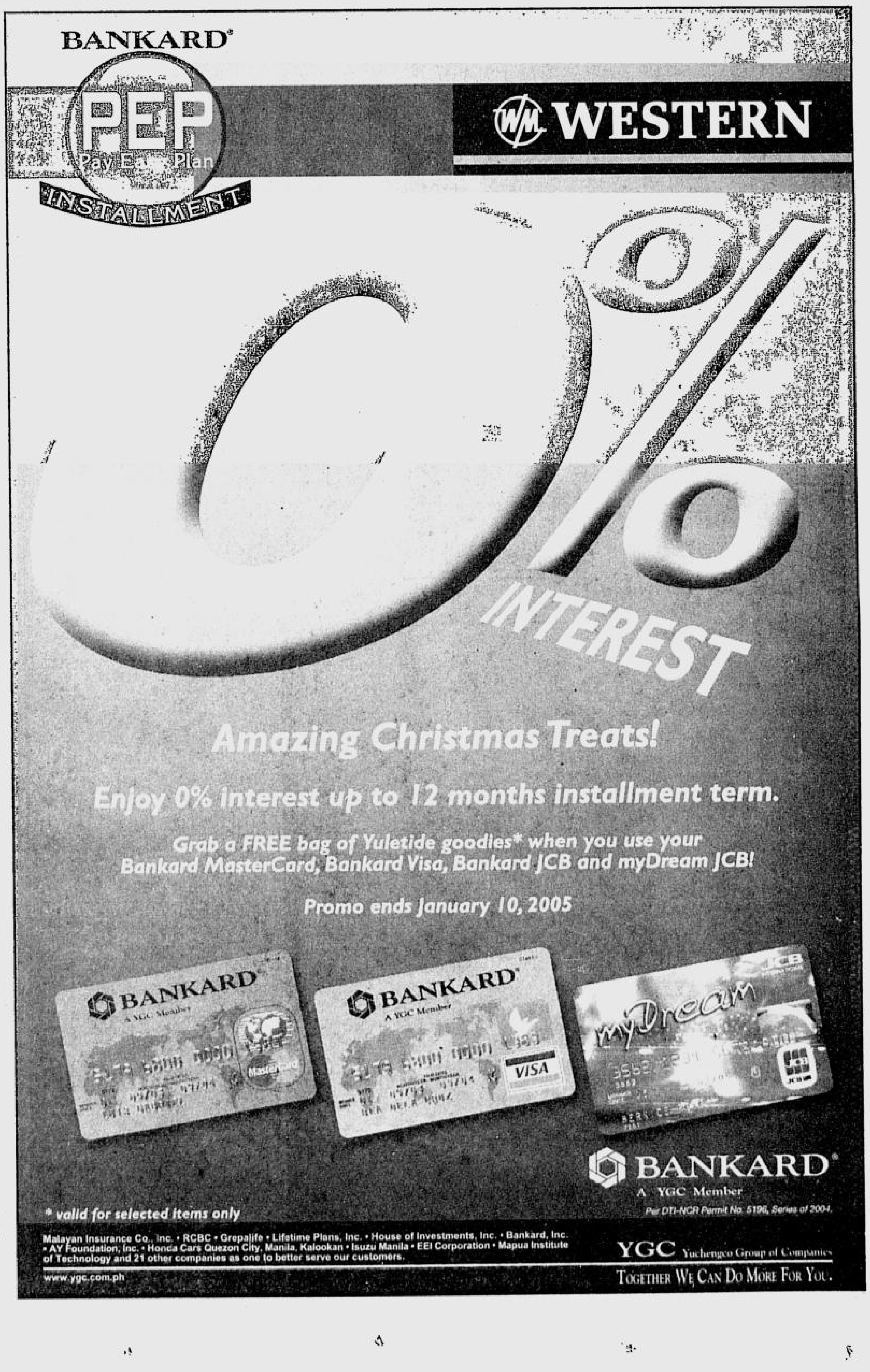
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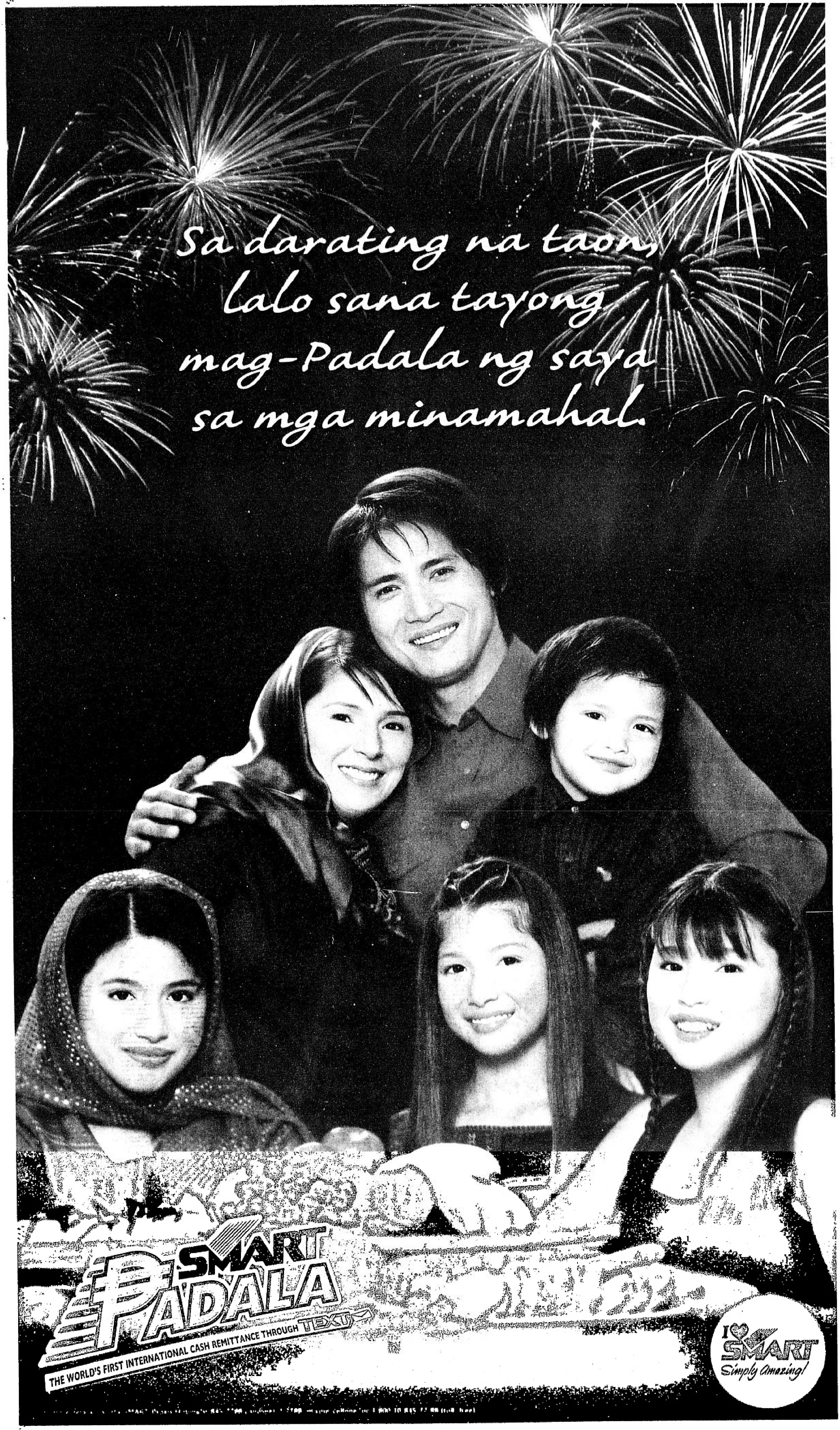
Sa darating na taon,
lalo sana tayong
mag-Padala ng saya
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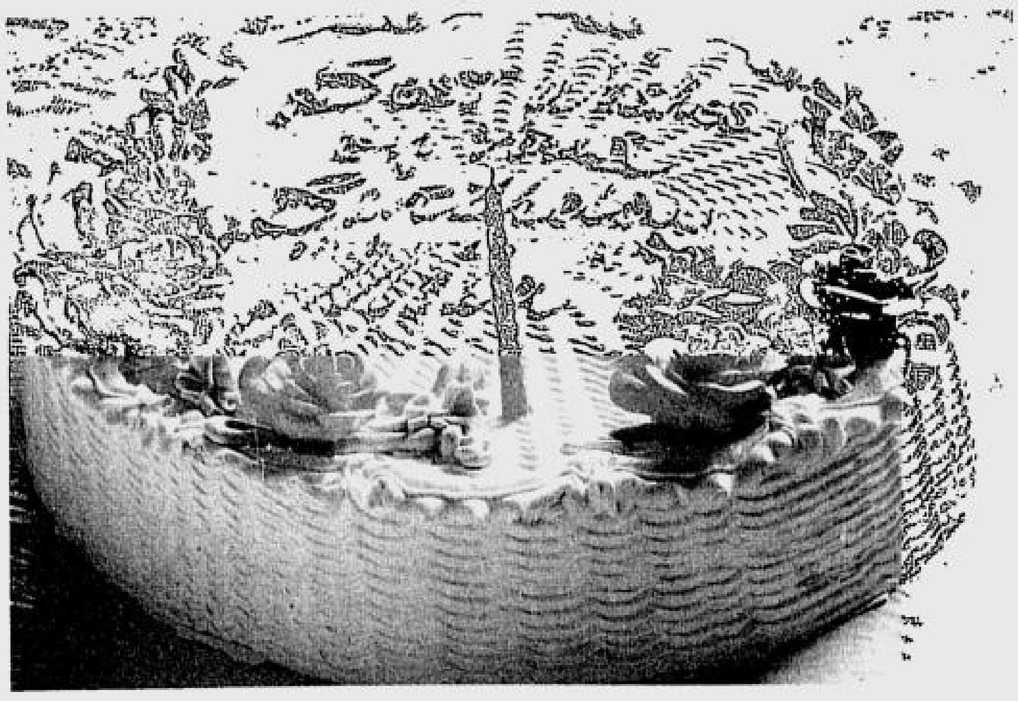
LIFESTYLE

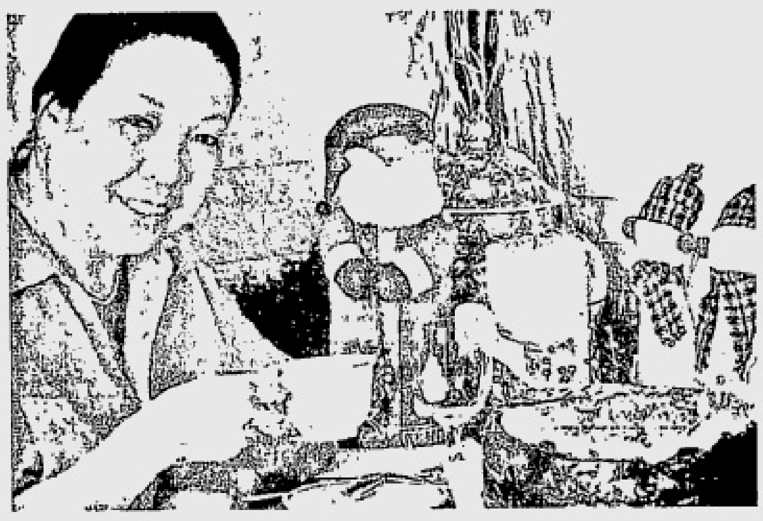


Sweets for the sweet

SOME flavors remain the same, year in and year out. At Hizon's Cakes & Pastries/Za's Café, the all-time favorites are the famous and old-fashioned *ensaymada*, mocha cake, cinnamon rolls, chocolate cake, lemon pie and Baked Turkey.

Celebrities, including Dolphy, former President Corazon Aquino and her daughter Kris, Cinderella's Therese Santos, Senators Mar Roxas and Miriam Defensor Santiago, and Rep. Imee Marcos, all have their own favorites at Hizon's.

Hizon's is at 1197 Jorge Bocobo corner Arquiza Sts., Ermita, Manila.



MOCHA chiffon cake (above) remains a favorite for holidays, birthdays and other occasions at Mila Hizon-Roasa's (left) dessert and pastries haven in Ermita.

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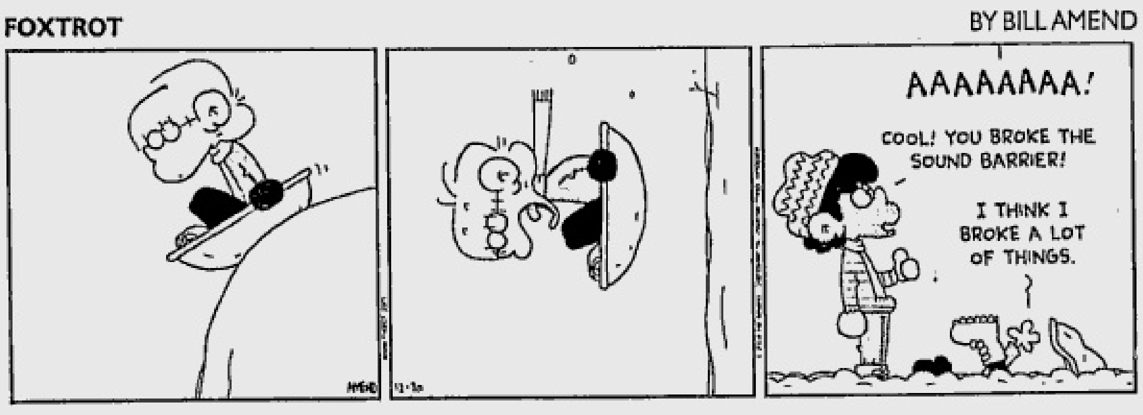
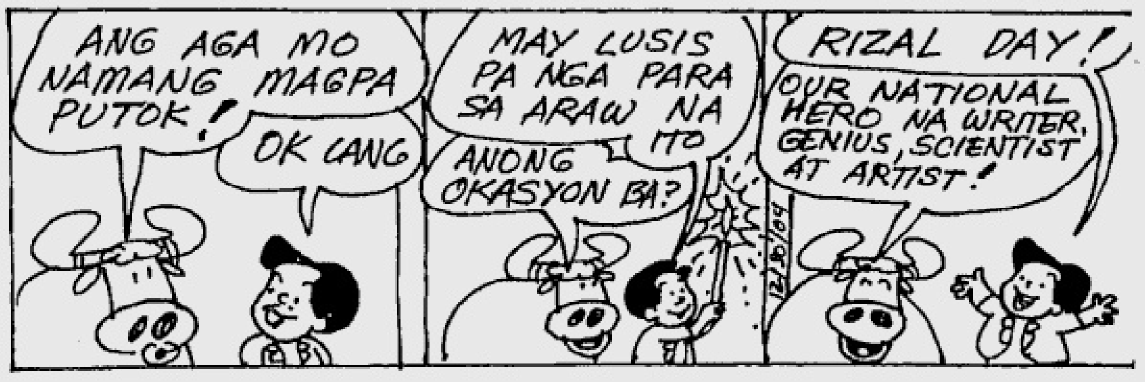
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2004

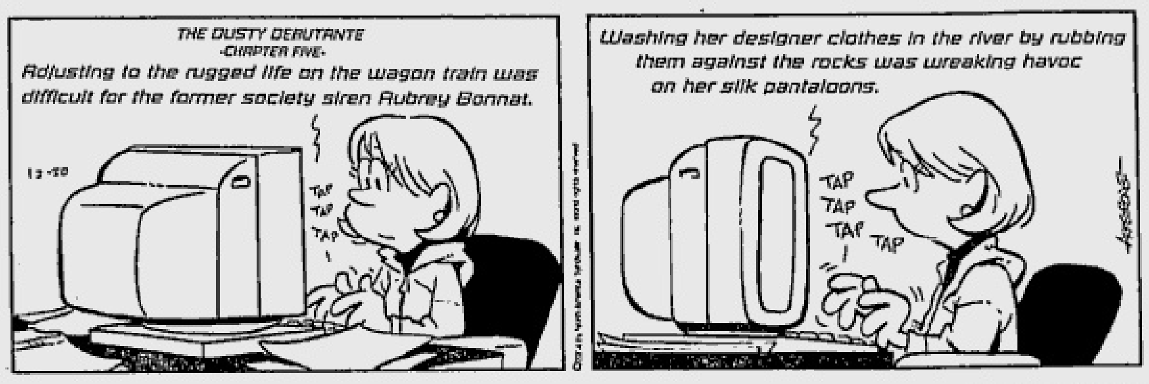
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


AAAAAAAA!
COOL! YOU BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER!
I THINK I BROKE A LOT OF THINGS.
12-30

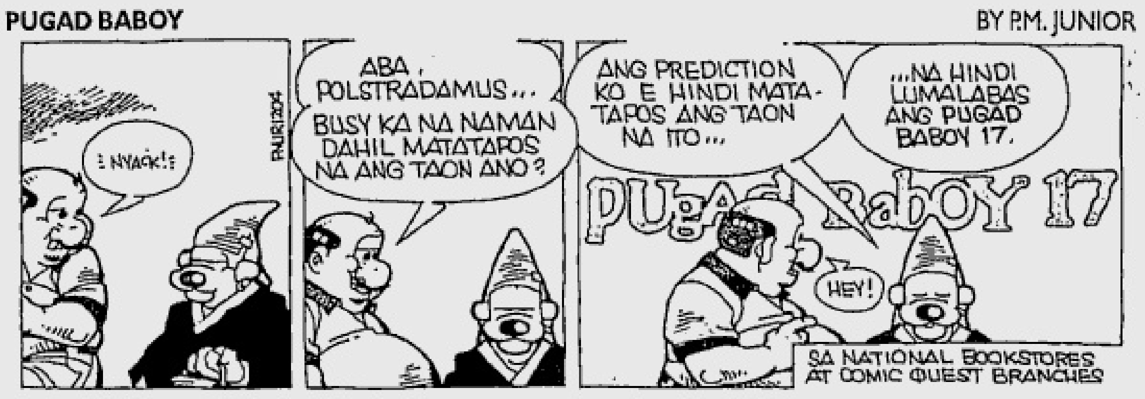
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


ANG AGA MO NAMANG MAGPA PUTOK!
OK LANG
MAY LUSIS PA NGA PARA SA ARAW NA ITO
ANONG OKASYON BA?
12-30-04
RIZAL DAY!
OUR NATIONAL HERO NA WRITER, GENIUS, SCIENTIST AT ARTIST!

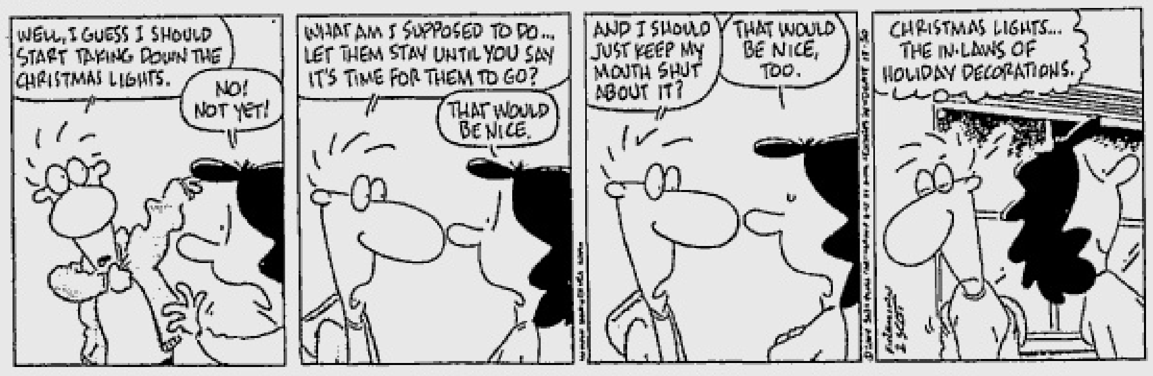
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THE DUSTY DEBUTANTE
-CHAPTER FIVE-
Adjusting to the rugged life on the wagon train was difficult for the former society siren Aubrey Bonnat.
12-30
TAP TAP TAP
Washing her designer clothes in the river by rubbing them against the rocks was wreaking havoc on her silk pantaloons.
TAP TAP TAP TAP

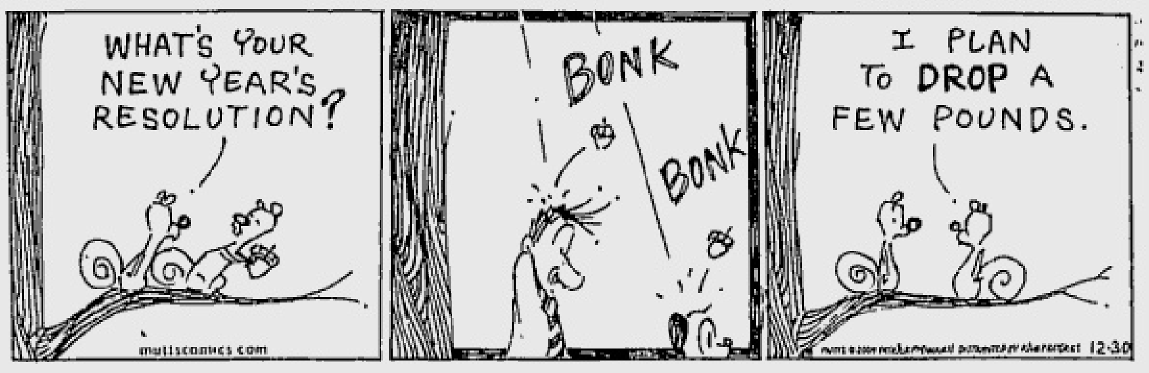
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


¡ NYACK! ¡
PMJR1204
ABA, POLSTRADAMUS...
BUSY KA NA NAMAN DAHIL MATATAPOS NA ANG TAON ANO?
ANG PREDICTION KO E HINDI MATATAPOS ANG TAON NA ITO...
...NA HINDI LUMALABAS ANG PUGAD BABOY 17.
PUGAD BABOY 17
HEY!
SA NATIONAL BOOKSTORES AT COMIC QUEST BRANCHES

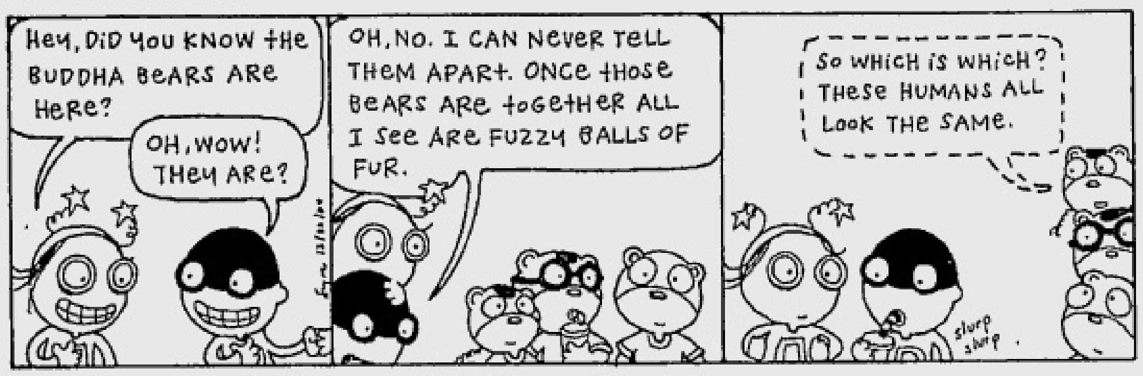
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WELL, I GUESS I SHOULD START TAKING DOWN THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.
NO! NOT YET!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO... LET THEM STAY UNTIL YOU SAY IT'S TIME FOR THEM TO GO?
THAT WOULD BE NICE.
AND I SHOULD JUST KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT ABOUT IT?
THAT WOULD BE NICE, TOO.
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS... THE IN-LAWS OF HOLIDAY DECORATIONS.

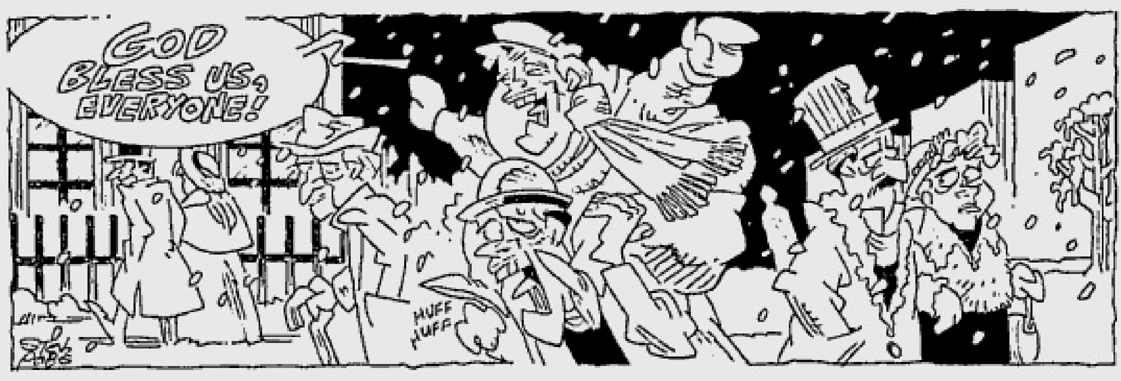
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?
muttscomics.com
BONK
BONK
I PLAN TO DROP A FEW POUNDS.
12-30

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, DiD you know the BUDDHA BEARS ARE Here?
OH, WOW! THEY ARE?
OH, NO. I CAN NEVER TELL THEM APART. ONCE THOSE BEARS ARE TOGETHER ALL I SEE ARE FUZZY BALLS OF FUR.
So WHICH IS WHICH? THESE HUMANS ALL LOOK THE SAME.
slurp slurp

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


GOD BLESS US, EVERYONE!
HUFF HUFF

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Above all, you're a realist. Your pragmatic approach to life makes you an armchair philosopher. You're clever with words, and you make your point succinctly. You're quick to see the faults in any system. You enjoy pleasurable times with good friends. The year ahead involves hard work. Go to it for rewards in 2006.

Birthdate of: Tracey Ullman, comedian/actress; Douglas Coupland, writer; Bo Diddley, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A discussion with someone really inspires you . It might be about politics, religion or philosophy. Whatever it is, you want to delve into it wholeheartedly.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might hear good news at work today. Perhaps the funding, budget, resources or equipment necessary for you to do your job are suddenly available to you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're naturally curious. You can't resist the proverbial "bright, shiny object." Conversations are pleasing because they are stimulating and exciting. (You love this sort of thing.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have lots of great ideas about how to improve your job today. These ideas are practical, yet they're ambitious in scope and size. You feel optimistic!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to make plans to have fun. Organize a party or any kind of social outing. Call up others for lunch. Meet someone after work. Enjoy yourself today!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a great day to entertain family members, or to putter at home in a pleasant but useful way. You can make something look better today, possibly even bigger.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Nothing can hold you back today. You feel optimistic, upbeat, positive and keen about life. You have a winning attitude, and that's all it takes. (Happiness is a state of mind.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're full of moneymaking ideas today. You have the Midas touch! Whether you're making money or spending money, somehow this brings you wealth and happiness.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Optimism and activity are two key factors necessary for your survival. Both of these are operative today. You feel positive and upbeat. Friends are a joy to see. Conversations are fun! Yay!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might feel spiritual or religiously reassured about something. This inner conviction is strengthening to your beliefs. It's something you welcome.

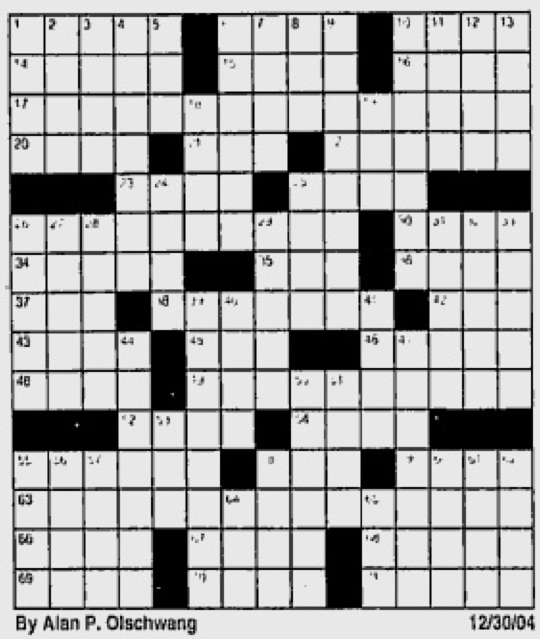
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A friend inspires you to explore school or publishing possibilities. Possibly a friend can help you in a legal matter. Either way, you're grateful for this positive encouragement.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Bosses, parents and VIPs are impressed with you today. You've got big ideas, and you're not afraid to tell the world. You know that a good thing will sell itself.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Accustom
6 Actress Kudrow
10 Coffee servers
14 Elementary particle
15 Point after deuce, perhaps
16 Lowest high tide
17 Start of Oscar Wilde quote
20 Eastern European
21 Goddess of folly
22 Worn away
23 Italian noble family
25 "Othello" villain
26 Part 2 of quote
30 Shape flint
34 "Midnight Cowboy" role
35 Three in Italia
36 Stiff hair
37 Ordinal ending
38 Assembles
42 Nova Scotia hrs.
43 Rip
45 Island garland
46 First name in cosmetics
48 Sea eagle
49 Part 3 of quote
52 Scott in a high court case
54 Foundation
55 Stockholm's country
58 Swiss canton
59 Native of Bangkok
63 End of quote
66 Bard's river
67 Enameled metalware
68 Slower than adagio
69 Billfold fillers
70 Distinctive flair
71 Viper

DOWN
1 Sacred bird of ancient Egypt
2 Memo
3 U.S. Cold War rival
4 Thieves
5 WSW opp.
6 Thin sheet of tin
7 __ fixe
8 Knight's address
9 Long-tongued mammal
10 Readies for removal
11 Peruse
12 Church part
13 Rushed
18 So long!
19 Part of NATO
24 Air pollution
25 Concerning
26 Narrow mountain ridge
27 __ noster
28 Actor Hawke
29 Value system
31 Below, to a bard
32 Bewildered
33 Eucharist plate
39 Estrange
40 Take care of
41 Dates
44 Blushes
47 Marked text to keep
50 Conan or Pat
51 Primary
53 Sports off.
55 EHA or RBI
56 Interlaced threads
57 Black, in verse
58 Coastal Bruins' letters
60 Rear
61 Feed the pot
62 Borodin's prince
64 Fa follower
65 Fla. neighbor



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
12/30/04

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

F	A	M	E	■	H	I	S	S	■	H	E	D	D	A
O	P	A	L	■	A	N	T	I	■	A	V	O	I	D
B	E	S	T	■	S	C	A	N	■	R	E	T	R	O
■	S	H	O	P	P	I	N	G	S	P	R	E	E	S
■	■	■	R	E	S	T	■	L	E	O	■	■	■	■
A	S	F	O	R	■	I	L	E	A	■	B	A	R	E
W	I	L	■	S	I	N	E	■	V	E	I	L	E	D
F	E	E	D	I	N	G	F	R	E	N	Z	I	E	S
U	N	S	E	A	T	■	T	E	S	T	■	S	S	E
L	A	H	R	■	E	L	S	A	■	I	N	T	E	L
■	■	■	■	B	R	O	■	C	A	R	E	■	■	■
W	I	N	N	I	N	G	S	T	R	E	A	K	S	■
I	D	E	A	S	■	G	A	I	N	■	T	A	L	E
L	O	T	T	O	■	E	L	O	I	■	E	T	O	N
E	S	S	E	N	■	R	E	N	E	■	N	E	W	S

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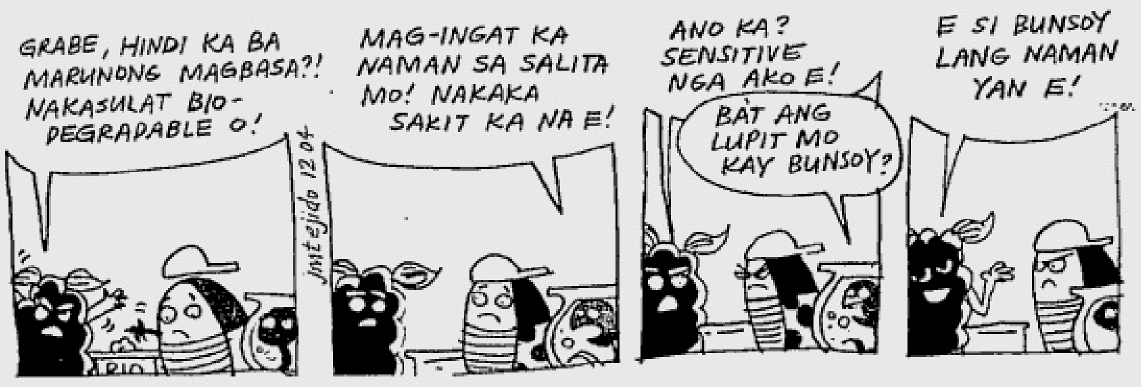
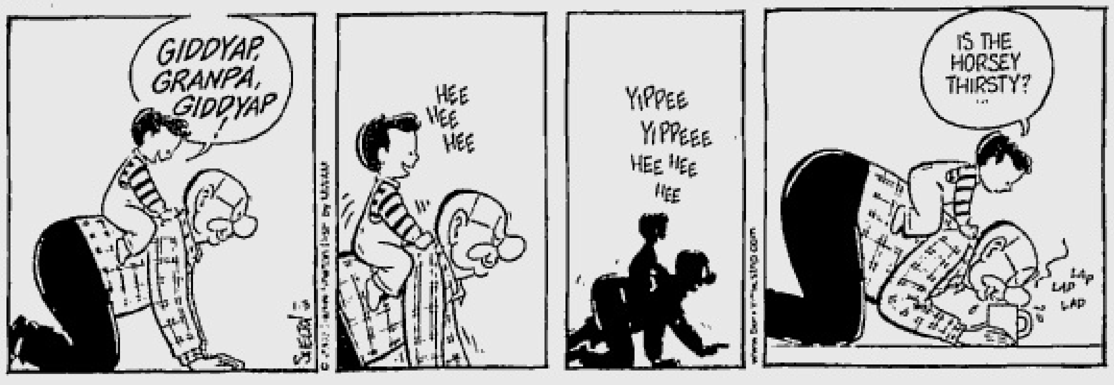
12/30/04

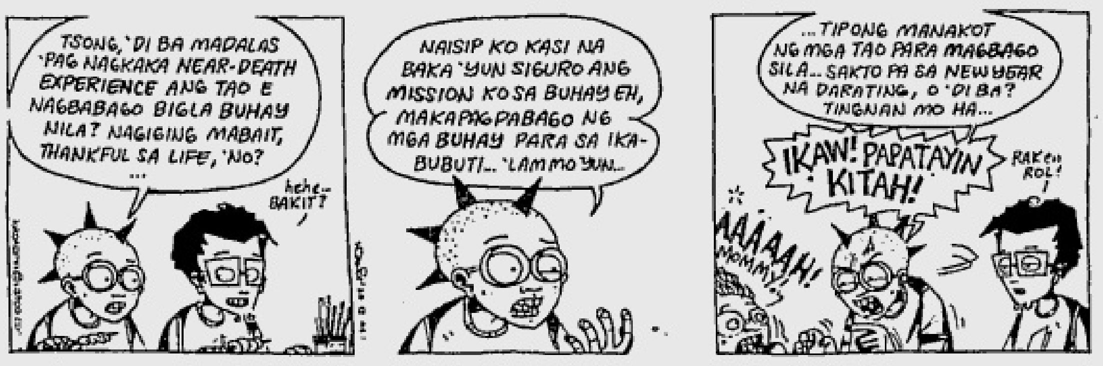
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GRABE, HINDI KA BA MARUNONG MAGBASA?! NAKASULAT BIO-DEGRADABLE O!
BIO
jmtejido 12 04
MAG-INGAT KA NAMAN SA SALITA MO! NAKAKA SAKIT KA NA E!
ANO KA? SENSITIVE NGA AKO E!
BAT ANG LUPIT MO KAY BUNSOY?
E SI BUNSOY LANG NAMAN YAN E!

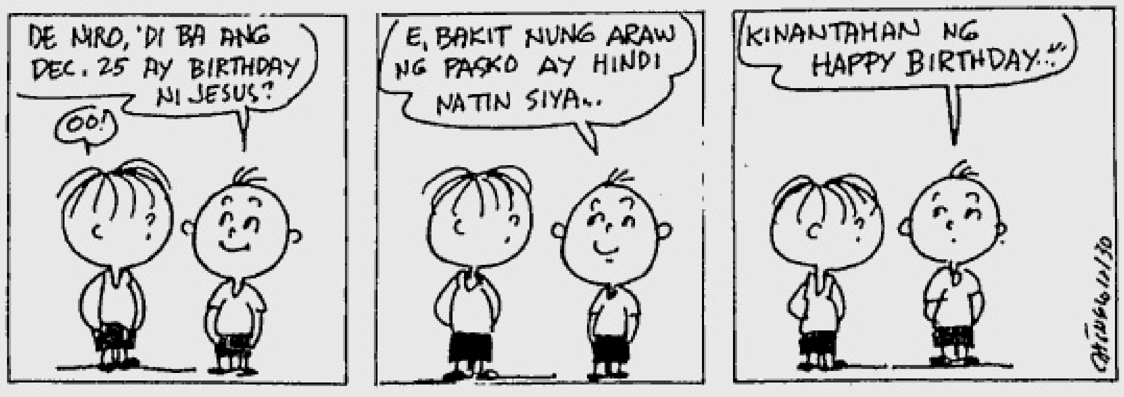
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


GIDDYAP, GRANPA, GIDDYAP!
HEE HEE HEE
YIPPEE YIPPEEE HEE HEE HEE
IS THE HORSEY THIRSTY?
LAP LAP LAP

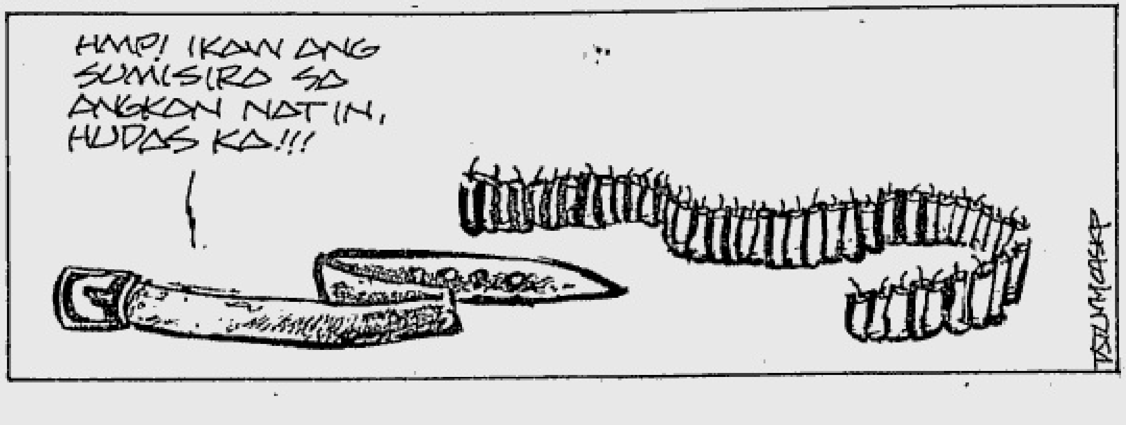
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, 'DI BA MADALAS 'PAG NAGKAKA NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE ANG TAO E NAGBABAGO BIGLA BUHAY NILA? NAGIGING MABAIT, THANKFUL SA LIFE, 'NO? ...
hehe... BAKIT?
NAISIP KO KASI NA BAKA 'YUN SIGURO ANG MISSION KO SA BUHAY EH, MAKAPAGPABAGO NG MGA BUHAY PARA SA IKABUBUTI... 'LAMMO 'YUN...
...TIPONG MANAKOT NG MGA TAO PARA MAGBAGO SILA... SAKTO PA SA NEW YEAR NA DARATING, O 'DI BA? TINGNAN MO HA...
IKAW! PAPATAYIN KITAH!
AAAAAAH! MOMMY!
RAKEN ROL!

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, 'DI BA ANG DEC. 25 AY BIRTHDAY NI JESUS?
OO!
E, BAKIT NUNG ARAW NG PASKO AY HINDI NATIN SIYA...
KINANTAHAN NG HAPPY BIRTHDAY...
CHIONGLO 11/30

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HMP! IKAW ANG SUMISIRA SA ANGKAN NATIN, HUDAS KA!!!

Heavenly dishes to welcome 2005

THE RICHMONDE Hotel's Grill offers Lobster Tail Thermidor, Grilled Lamb Chops with Mint Glaze, Grilled Tuna in Soy Calamansi Sauce and Roast Prime Rib with Sauce Bourguinonne, appetizers, hot soups, desserts, iced tea and wine. Call 6387777.

DINING OUT

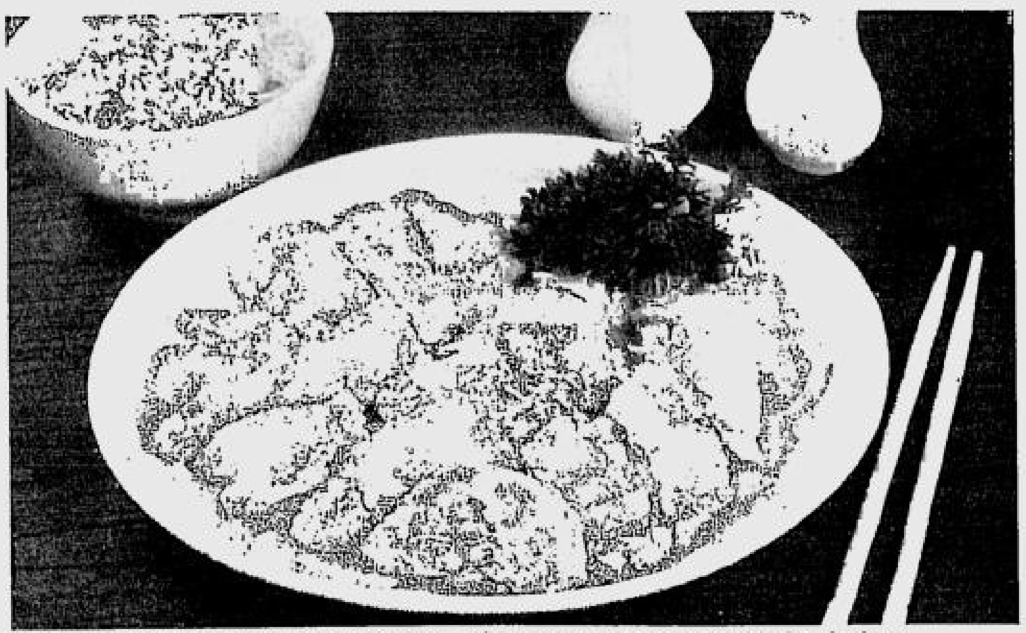
Makati Shangri-La will hold a New Year's Eve bash on Dec. 31 at the Lobby Lounge. Groove to the hits of Flintstones and the Gang. A dinner buffet will be held at 7-11 p.m. Call 8138888.

SEGAFREDO Espresso Bar features the 12 Days of Christmas promo. Until Jan. 1, 2005, Segafredo gives away special gifts to the first 12 customers with orders worth P1,000 on a single receipt. Promo starts at 12 noon daily. A free slice of Pannetonne will be served on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, 2005 for every order of Cafe Americano. Segafredo is located at Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center and Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Call 7574058/ 8453610/ 8453546.

MANDARIN Oriental Manila features "Distinctly Swedish" on Jan. 10-15, 2005. Specialties include Graved Lax with dill-mustard sauce; Swedish Meatballs with cranberry sauce; Veal Stew with Dill; Wallenbergsare Veal Frikadelle; Nordic Profiteroles with Creme Bavaroise; Beef Frikadelle with Beetroot and Capers; Poached Cod in Egg-Parsley Sauce; Swedish Pancakes with Strawberries and Whipped Cream; Swedish Apple Pie with Vanilla Sauce. Call 7508888.

CALIFORNIA Pizza Kitchen offers California Club Pizza, topped with Nueske's applewood smoked bacon, grilled chicken and Mozzarella cheese, tomatoes and lettuce underneath fresh, sliced avocados. CPK is at Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Edsa Shangri-La Plaza and Tomas Morato.

SHANGHAI Bistro offers unlimited dimsum treats. For a minimum of four persons and at only P199 per person, customers can order all the dim sum they can eat. The offer is good for lunch Monday to Friday at Shanghai Bistro-Eastwood City Walk 2. Call 6877103/ 6871861.



SUPER BOWL of China presents its outreach program, Fortune Cookie for the Less Fortunate. Until Jan. 6, 2005, Super Bowl of China sells fortune cookies for P5 a piece. Proceeds of the sale will be given to Pamulaan Luman Learning Center in Mindanao for the benefit of underprivileged youths in the province. The fund will be used for the purchase of books, instructional materials and computers. Super Bowl of China is located at Megastrip, SM Megamall; Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City; Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City; Chefs Avenue, Festival Mall, Alabang; Eastwood City Walk 2, Libis, Quezon City; SM City North Edsa, Quezon City; SM City, Fairview; and Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan.

OUTBACK offers Lamb Rack, Aussie Strip and Alaskan King Crab Legs. Aussie Strip is served with a choice of two side dishes (jacket potato, Aussie chips, veggies, corn salad, garlic rice, coleslaw, mashed potato). Lamb Rack and Aussie Strip go well with Sea Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon. Alaskan King Crab Legs can be enjoyed with Sea Ridge Chardonnay. Outback is located at Glorietta 4, Makati City; Libis, Quezon City; and Alabang Town Center.

MAKATI Shangri-La's Red presents Crispy Oysters, New England Clam Chowder, Angel Hair Pasta with Tomatoes, Red Lobster and Basil and Valrhona Chocolate Cake for New Year's Eve. These dishes come with a complimentary glass of champagne. Call 8138888.

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A festive New Year dish

GIVE a new twist to an old favorite for your own home-cooked fiesta to start 2005.

Liven up the taste of the traditional Fiesta Chicken Galantina with the Lea & Perrins Catsup dipping sauce. Just add Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce, a quality product from HP Foods Ltd. of the United Kingdom, to your favorite catsup.

Other HP products are HP Barbecue, HP Sauce and HP Chili.

Fiesta Chicken Galantina

Ingredients:
1 pc chicken (1.2-1.4 kg), deboned
1 tbsp Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
1 tbsp *calamansi* juice
2 cans *chorizo Bilbao*, ground
2 cans Vienna sausage, ground
½ c cheddar cheese, grated
½ c celery, chopped
5 eggs, beaten
4-5 strips cheddar cheese
4-5 strips carrots

Marinate chicken in Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce, salt, pepper and *calamansi* juice. Keep in refrigerator for at least an hour.

Combine remaining ingredients to make stuffing. Fill chicken and sew opening. Wrap chicken in plastic sheer and place in microwave-safe pan. Microwave at 50 percent (medium) power for 20 minutes. Then, another 10 minutes at 100 percent (high) power level. Remove from oven. Allow to cool. Slice and serve.

Serve with Lea & Perrins Catsup dipping sauce with half of tomato or banana catsup. To make this sauce, simply mix 2 tsp of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce with half a cup of tomato or banana catsup.

From the oven to the table

COOKING Basics, a hands-on culinary cooking center, makes kitchen work easy for its chefs and students by using the right materials.

A fixture at Cooking Basics is Glad's full-range of household wraps and bags.

Glad Ovenware can go from the oven to the table. It is an all-in-one pan that can be used when preparing, baking, serving, storing and reheating food. It can even be re-used after cleaning.

Glad Bake can be used to line cake pans and skillets for no-stick cakes, pies and pastries and gourmet preparations like *en papillote*.

Glad Cling Wrap stretches and clings excellently.

The Glad Press 'N Seal seals, helping keep food fresher and longer in the refrigerator and freezer. It is also microwave safe.

The Cooking Basics recreational culinary center is located at the G/F Unit 5, Vivere Suites Asean Drive, Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Call 7710082 or e-mail cookingbasics@pacific.net.ph.

Crusty Baked Chicken

½ c Japanese bread crumbs
½ c all-purpose flour
1/3 c parmesan cheese
1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
1 tsp dried basil
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp paprika
¼ tsp black pepper
1 lemon juice
2 tbsp unsalted butter or margarine, melted
2 tbsps vegetable oil
1 whole chicken (1.5 kilos), cut into 8 serving pieces
Glad Fresh Protect Storage Bag
9x12 Glad Ovenware

Heat oven to 350°F. Pat chicken dry and season with salt and pepper. Combine bread crumbs, flour, parmesan cheese, parsley, basil, salt, paprika and pepper in a Glad Storage Bag. Seal and shake to mix.

Combine lemon juice, butter and oil in a large bowl. Toss chicken pieces in, turning pieces to coat. Working with a few pieces at a time, shake chicken in crumb mixture in a Glad Storage Bag to coat evenly. Put pieces in a 9x12 Glad Ovenware.

Bake in heated 350°F oven for 45 minutes or until internal temperature of a thigh registers 180°F on an instant-read meat thermometer or until juices are clear when the thick part of the thigh is pierced.

Increase oven temperature to broil. Broil chicken until lightly golden, 5-8 minutes.

HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL

THE ESSENTIAL BAKING & PASTRY SERIES. This 26 – day hands-on class will cover the basic of pastry, desserts, bread baking as well as cake decorating. It is suitable for those seeking an entry-level position in pastry shop, hotel or restaurants. Classes begin on January 17 and ends March 15, 2005. Classes are held every Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES: This 20-day hands on class is our innovative way to teaching the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins January 20 and ends April 2, 2005. Classes are held every Thursdays & Fridays from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit. For more information call 726-5316 or 412 7792 and ask Lino & Rita.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

January 7 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison* Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. P1,500

January 7 (Friday) 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) BROWNIES & BARS By: Heny Sison* Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Centers and Butterscotch Bars. P1,500

January 7 (Friday) 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) KOREAN COOKING I: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Cecile Park, owner of Silla Korean Restaurant & food consultant to various Korean restaurants in Metro Manila* Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seaweed, Beef or Tahong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim. P2,500

January 8 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) PIZZA CLASS WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, Master Pizzaiolo & Barista, food consultant of various Italian restaurants all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan, Italy* In this class you will learn the history, concept and design of pizza making. Learn how to make pizza dough, tomato base sauce, white sauce base, preparation, set up pizza counter, know the ingredients and toppings. Recipes: Margherita, Napoli Classica, 4 Formaggi, Pizza Vegetariana, La Gitana, Piccantina, 4 Stagioni, Calzone & Frutti di Mare. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

January 8 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) New Class! SOFT & CHEWY COOKIE WORKSHOP By: Heny Sison* Butterscotch Cookies, French Macaroons, Cashew Petit, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Pecan Squares and Snickerdoodles. P2,500

January 10 – 14 (Monday – Friday) 17 – 20 (Monday – Thursday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION / BASIC by: Heny Sison* A 9-day practical basic cake decorating designed for shop owner, teacher, baker, chef and enthusiast. Includes fancy borders, over 20 icing flowers, color flow, method of printing & script, sugar molding, flower bunching, figure piping, decorated cookies, birthday & wedding cake assembly. Full participation. P16,000

January 10 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jackie H. Alleje, owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet)* This class will guide you through the theory and the recipes of Phase I – the strictest phase of the diet and how to prepare them in your home. All participants will be weighed on the onset of the program. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800

January 11 – 13 (Tuesday – Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) FOOD STYLING WORKSHOP by: Chef Jill Sandique, Food Consultant & Food Stylist, Blue Ribbon graduate at Peter Kump's New York Cooking School & Tom Roa, founding photographer of Food Magazine, faculty, Asia Pacific Film Institute & visiting lecturer of UP Film Institute* Are you planning a career in advertising? If yes then food styling is for you. Learn the concept and practical techniques to artistically present the food for the camera. The emphasis will be on creating images that will appeal to the senses. Specific food styling techniques will be covered including ice cream & other problem food. Professional tips will include selecting and caring for ingredients, reviving food in front of the camera. Each student will receive a copy of the finished image. Full participation. P12,000

January 14 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) DIFFERENT CHOCOLATE CAKES by: Chef Jacqueline Ang Po, Pastry Chef of Fleur de Lys Patisserie, dean's list graduate, California Culinary Academy* Chocolate Fudge Cake, Flourless Chocolate Walnut Cake, Sachertorte, German Chocolate Cake and Warm Chocolate Souffle Cake. P1,500

January 15 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) New Class! CAFE BREAKFAST PASTRY WORKSHOP PART I by: Heny Sison* Streusel Crumb Coffee Cake, Almond Poppy Seed Muffins, Pecan Tartlet, Banana Macadamia Nut Coffee Cake, Cheese Roll and Yeast Raised Glazed Doughnuts. P2,500

January 15 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jackie H. Alleje * This class will guide you through the theory and the recipes of Phase I – the strictest phase of the diet and how to prepare them in your home. All participants will be weighed on the onset of the program. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800

January 21 (Friday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) FLOWER SHOP FAVORITES by: Glenn Remorca, floral designer* Make fresh floral arrangement for birthdays, baptismal, anniversaries in different styles and materials. Sourcing of materials included. Demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors & glue gun. P3,000

January 22 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (classroom A) FAVORITE PASTA DISHES by: Chef Jill Sandique* Learn how to cook your favorite pasta dishes the easy way. Sauces to be taught in the class are the ff: Puttanesca, Carbonara, Pomodoro, Alfredo, Bolognese and Primavera plus bonus recipes. P1,700

January 22 (Saturday) 1:30 – 5:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC RESTAURANT SERVICE SKILLS by: Cecile Mauricio, former editor of Mabuhay Philippines (Philippine Airlines' in-flight magazine), is a communication and marketing consultant for various restaurants.* Restaurant staff who can communicate well is the key to improved sales and service. A concise workshop for new waiters and waitresses, new restaurant owners, or a refresher course for regular staff. Course outline: Communication Skills, Personality Development, Customer Service, Sales & Marketing Concepts and Service Strategies. P1,200

January 22 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) TAPAS II New Class! by: Chef Ed Quimson, is a seasoned master chef of Spanish origin, creator of RASTRO Tapas Bar & Restaurant at Rockwell and Chef Ed's Restaurant at Salcedo Village, Makati City. He has also lent his expertise to such restaurants as La Tasca, Via Mare, The Nielsen Tower, the Member's Lounge of the Phil. Stock Exchange & the Subic Yacht Club* Recipes: Tigres (Fried Stuffed Mussels), Arroz Abanda (Paella Rice served with Poached Seafood and Alioli Sauce), Pastel be Balut, Callos, Natillas, Pescado al Penalti and Fabada Asturiana. P2,500

January 24 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE II by: Jackie H. Alleje* This class continues the discussion on the diet & healthy nutrition with recipes of Stage II. Participants will share their experience from stage I. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800

January 25 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) HOMEMADE SAUSAGES, CONDIMENTS & MARINADE WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes, Food Consultant, co-owner of Simply Desserts trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School* Discover ways to transform meat, poultry & seafood into profitable menu items. SAUSAGES: Chorizo Bilbao, Longanisa Ilongga, Italian Sausage, Seafood Sausage & Mexican Sausage; CONDIMENTS: Honey-Mustard Sauce, Sweet Pickles Chips & Atchara; MARINADE: Homemade Tapa, Homemade Bulgogi & Tocino; DISHES: Sausage, Sauerkraut & Potato Casserole & Country Style Pork & Beans. P2,500

January 26 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) SIOPAO & MAMI WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sion* Chicken Bola-Bola, Asado Pao, Bola-bola Pao, Jumbo Siopao with Chinese Sausage, Chicken Asado Mami & Beef Mami. P2,500

January 27 (Thursday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) COFFEE CLASS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio Sandoval, owner of Goodies N' Sweet Bakeshop & C'est Si Bon, Dean's list graduate of Culinary at the California Culinary Academy* If you are planning to open a coffee shop this course is for you. Learn the four fundamentals of coffee brewing, home espresso, guide to steaming & foaming. Make fun toppings & garnishes & master the art of coffee making. Recipes: Caffé Latte, Caffé Mocha, Caffé Americano, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato & Espresso Con Panna, Almond Coffee Freeze, Icy Rum Coffee Cream, Toffee Coffee, Mudslide Malt, Mocha Rumba, Rocky Road and more! P3,000

January 28 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING: WORKSHOP by: Chef Koichi Kondo, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants * Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice P2,500

January 29 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) New Class! COMMERCIAL BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP II by: Chef Jill Sandique * Egg Pan de Sal, Foccacia, Pullman Loaf, Multigrain Bread, Dinner Rolls, Rye Bread, Brioche & Two kinds of Cinnamon Rolls. P2,500

January 29 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) SAUSAGE II: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes* Breakfast Meatloaf, Chicken Honey Sausage, Breakfast Sausage, Chicken Teriyaki (Marinade), Garlic Sausage, Frankfurters, Burong Mangga (Pickled item), Corned Beef, Vienna Sausage. P2,500

January 31 (Monday) (classroom A) POPULAR CHINESE DISHES FOR CATERING by: Chef Katherine Sion* Sweet Corn Soup with Crabmeat, Braised Pata Tim with Vegetables, Saute Shrimps with Greenpeas & Quail Egg, Peking Noodles with Chopsuey, Fried Rice with Assorted Meats, Fried Crispy Chicken Chinese Style & Buchi. P1,700

TUITION FEE includes ingredients. Reservation is required.
WEDDING & BIRTHDAY CAKE orders by appointment only. We sell Cake Decorating, Confectionery and Baking Supplies.

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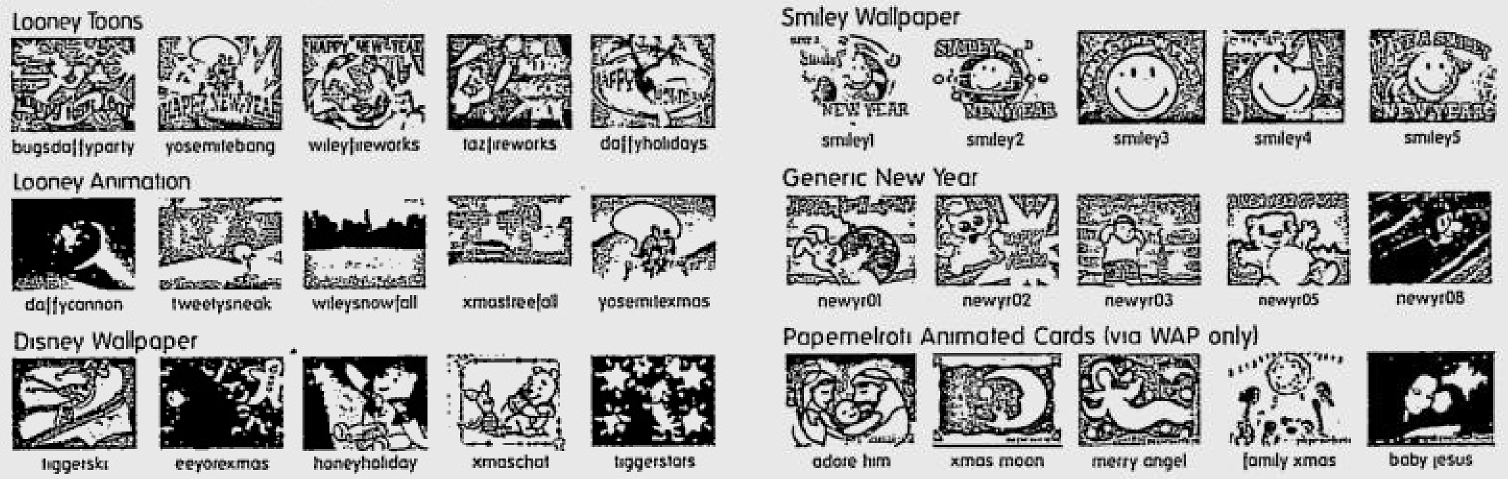
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3265, Series of 2004.

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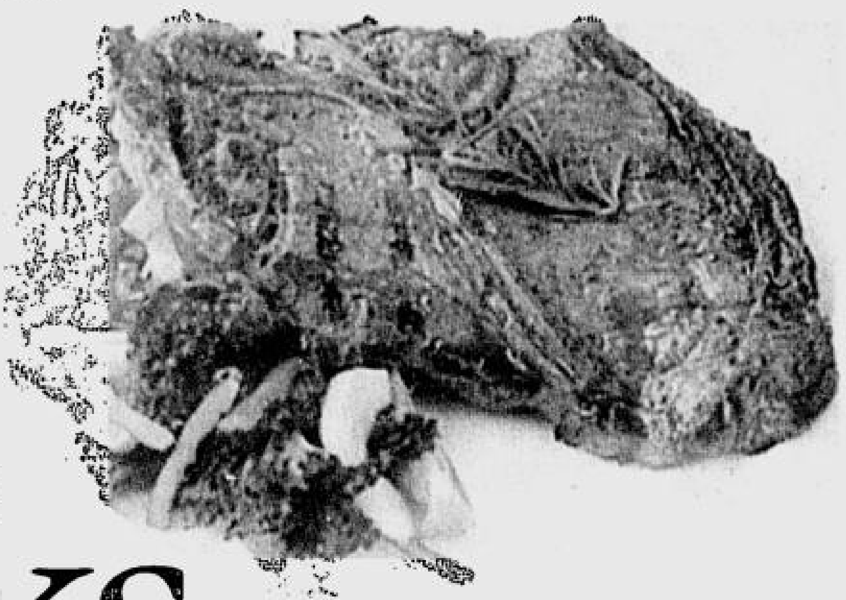


AGED Steak served with vegetable salad

Aged steaks, anyone?

By Leonarda N. Camacho
Contributor

HAVE you tried Herbed Beef Burgers and Aged Steaks with a sip of exotic vintage wine?

Not yet?

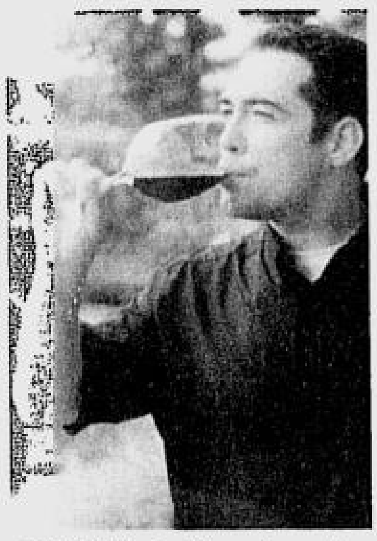
Then, you must visit The Vin (for vino or wine) Café-Bistro on Centennial Road, Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga, just one hour and 15 minutes away from Manila.

The place is surrounded by a lush garden complete with a pond, a tennis court, a mini-golf course and cottages, often filled with children and parents. Nearby is the Clear Water Country Club and Hotel.

With master chef Philip John Golding in the kitchen and Ferdinand George Canlas managing, The Vin offers delicious food at incredibly reasonable prices. It has its own wine cellar to boot!

Golding, who is married to Sharlene Saldaña of Cebu City, is a ranking member of the Master Chef Society of the World. He met his Filipino wife in school in London and moved to the Philippines seven years ago where he has been using his culinary skills since.

He works at both The Vin Café-Bistro and The Grill Room, another restaurant close-by.



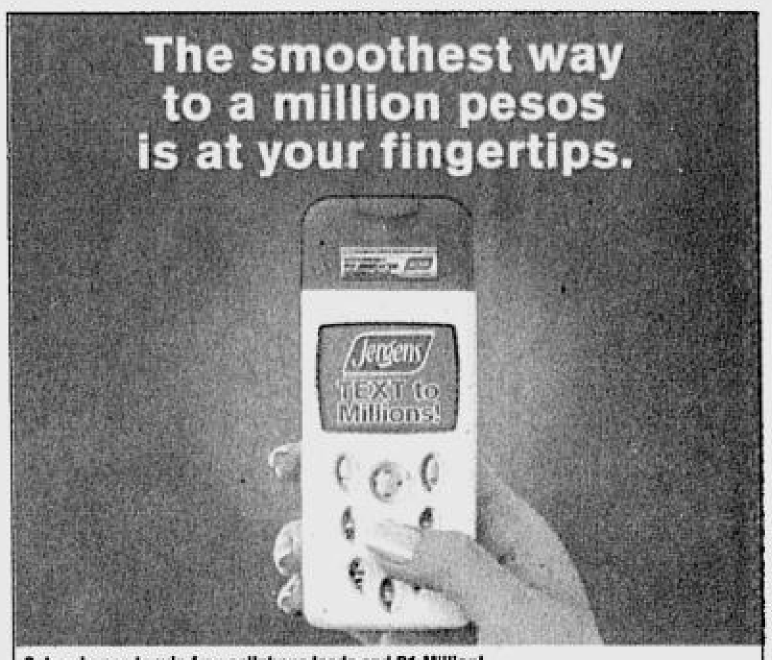
CHEF Philip Golding takes a sip of vintage wine offered at the Clear Water café-bistro.

The Vin Café-Bistro, The Grill Room and Clear Water Country Club and Hotel are all owned by wine connoisseur Denny Wang, who has at least six wine cellars. The cellars contain vintage wines, —some as old as 100 years—and come from all over the world.

Wang, who continues to add to his collection, is so interested in wines that he is soon publishing a book on them.

If you want to taste Herbed Beef Burgers and Aged Steaks, call Primebeef Company at 9265647, fax 9265664 or text 0918-9033820. For a minimum of P2,000, they will deliver. Gift packs that include wine may be ordered for as low as P800.

HERBED Beef Burger served with onions and crispy potatoes on a wooden tray



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STEAMED Scallop Shell with Golden Mushroom

BAKED Crab with Salt and Pepper

Promise of Hong Kong

MANY restaurants may claim to serve authentic Hong Kong cuisine but very few actually live up to their promise.

Harbour City is one of those few places that try to live up to expectations. Owner Lourdes Teng says chefs Jimmy Lo and Ricky Ho will not allow anything less than the best inside their kitchen.

For instance, to make a soup stock for the Superior Sauce that is poured over stir-fried prawns or lobsters, an entire leg of Chinese ham is boiled. Salted Fish Fried Rice uses *kiam hi* (salted fish) imported from a tiny fishing town in Kowloon.

Teng says the restaurant's entire second floor is the kitchen because the chef insists there should be one person overseeing each cooking station. Each cook is trained to follow procedures strictly so as not to compromise the authenticity of each Hong Kong dish.

Another notable rice dish is Harbour City's Two-Tone Rice, which may be considered a Chinese version of the paella. Rice is steamed in prawns with white sauce and strips of white chicken meat in tomato sauce. The tangy tomato sauce is a most suitable complement to the rich cream sauce. It is then molded into a red and white yin yang pattern when served.

Teng says Harbour City is a fine dining seafood restaurant, and serves only the freshest fish, lobster, scallops, oysters and crabs. Some of the restaurant's main offerings are the Pearl Fish in Taoso (mashed soybean and crushed garlic are crisp-fried and sprinkled over steamed melt-in-the-mouth Pearl Fish); Steamed Scallops with Golden Mushrooms (arranged on half shells, the steamed scallops are minced and formed into patties that lie on top of steamed golden mushrooms then drizzled with a very light sauce of fish stock, ginger and herbs and spices); *sotanghon* (sauteed and mixed with spicy steamed crabs then left to simmer until there is just a hint of soup stock left and the secret spices create a bouquet of robust flavor and aroma).

For dessert, Harbour City has the Masachi, sticky rice filled with black sesame with creamy filling and generously rolled over powdered peanuts. Customers get complimentary freshly brewed tea.

Teng says for the Mooncake festival Harbour City will have a traditional dice game where diners will get the chance to win fabulous prizes.

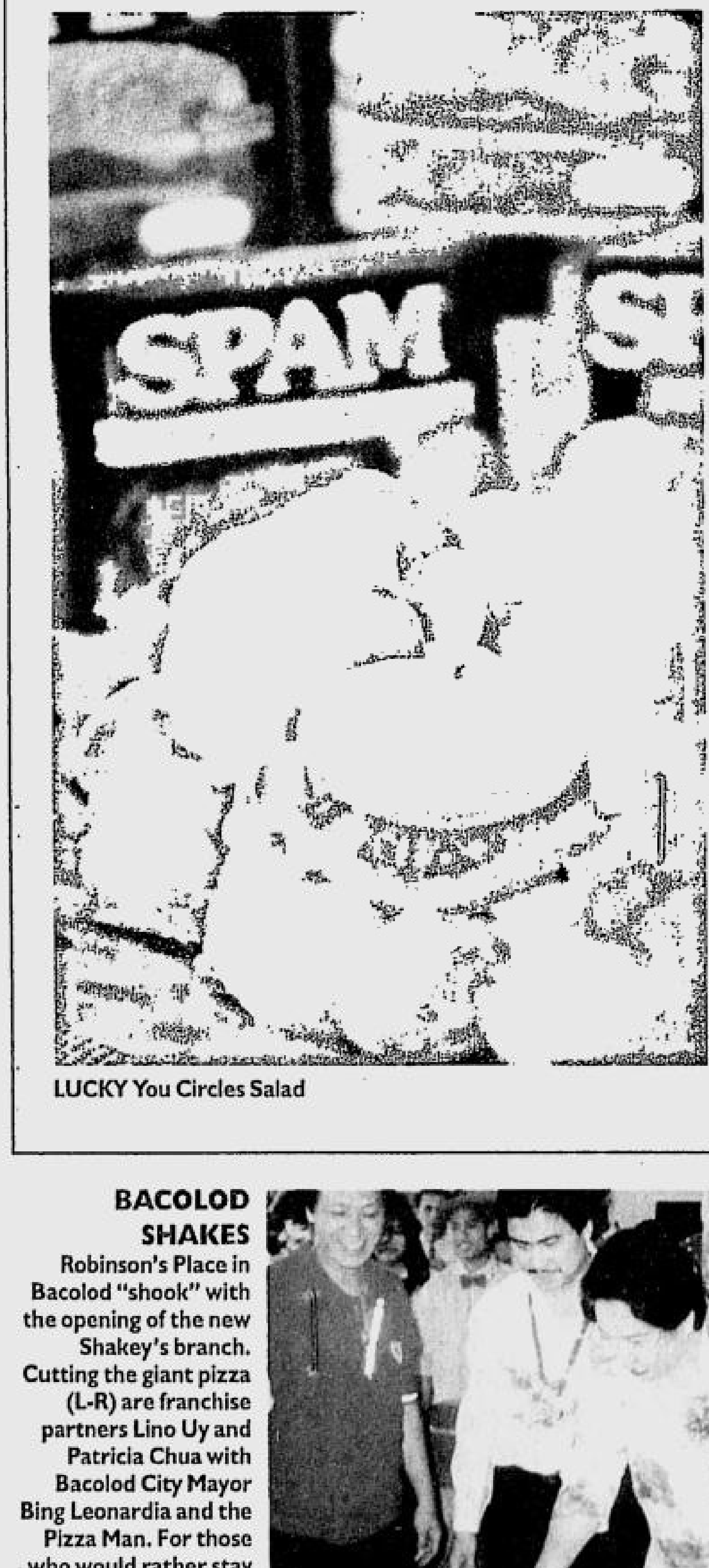
Harbour City is at 22 Jupiter corner Galaxy Sts., Bel-Air Village, Makati City, and 221 Wilson St., Greenhills. Call 8979797, 8970707, 7277351, 7230386 or fax 8982100.

TWO-TONED Fried Rice

Recipes for good luck

IF you want to follow the tradition of serving round foods this New Year for good luck but like something other than the usual fruits, Nancy Reyes-Lumen has come up with these two recipes.

The food critic and editor/publisher of Cook Magazine and host of "Practical Cook" gives Spam luncheon meat a New Year's twist in "Lucky You Circles Salad" and "Lucky Maki."



LUCKY You Circles Salad

Lucky You Circles Salad

2 cans Spam luncheon meat, boiled then scooped to form balls (save the trimmings for another recipe)

2 c peeled grapes
1 c chips or cracked nachos
some oranges
Dressing:
1 c sour cream
½ c fruit juice (your choice)
1 tbsp calamansi honey syrup
salt
pepper

Combine everything in a large bowl then pour the dressing over the mixture.

Lucky Maki

½ k ground pork
1 can Spam luncheon meat, cubed
1 tbsp cinnamon powder
½ tbsp salt
½ tbsp pepper
1 tbsp sugar
1-2 tbsp potato starch
1 tbsp sesame oil
Optional: ½ tsp chili powder

Combine all in steel or glass bowl. Knead and "mash" against the sides of the bowl to firm the meat. Shape into a ball then either steam or deep-fry.

To deep-fry: Wrap in bean curd skin. Tie ends and deep fry.

To steam: Line a bowl with food grade plastic film. Put in meat mixture. Shape into a ball and tie ends. Steam till done. When done, let it cool then serve cold.

It is important to keep the meat mixture slightly chilled before frying or steaming.

Other ways to prepare and enjoy Spam are demonstrated by Spamjam Café outlets at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City and Robinson's Galleria.

LUCKY Maki

BACOLOD SHAKES Robinson's Place in Bacolod "shook" with the opening of the new Shakey's branch. Cutting the giant pizza (L-R) are franchise partners Lino Uy and Patricia Chua with Bacolod City Mayor Bing Leonardia and the Pizza Man. For those who would rather stay home than eat out, a Shakey's meal is just a phone call away. Call 5338000.

Season for 'decadence'

CHRISTMAS is a season of traditions: gift-giving, hanging a *parol*, caroling, *simbang gabi* and the Noche Buena followed by the Media Noche on New Year's Eve.

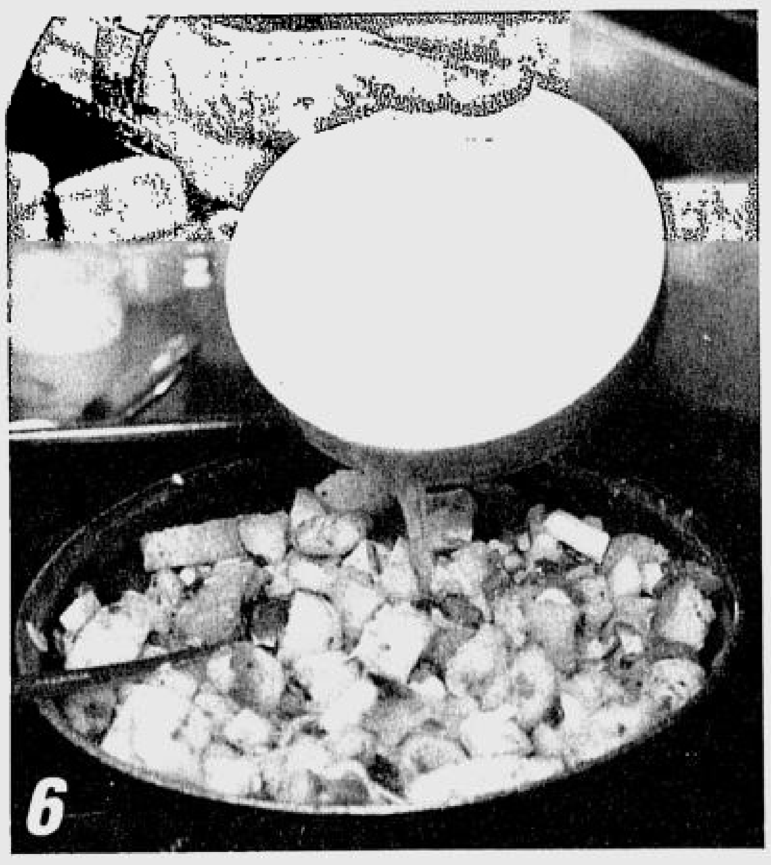
Holiday meals, of course, mean baked items for dessert or snack.

Maya Decadence Fudge Brownie mix promises treats the whole family will surely enjoy. It is convenient and easy-to-bake and comes with an extra treat, a bar of Toblerone Swiss milk chocolate that can be the perfect topping for every brownie.

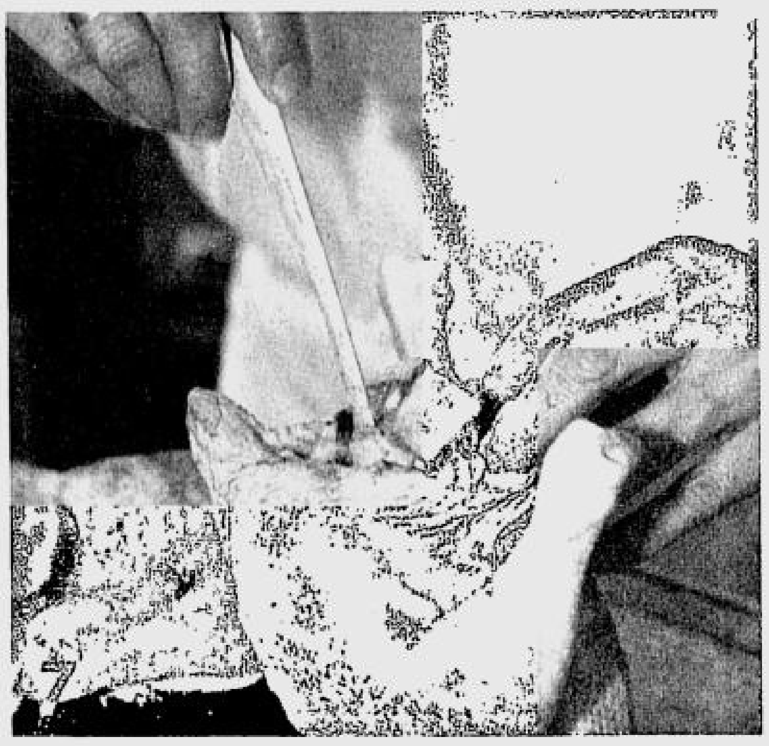
Bake a delightful dessert for your loved ones with the Maya Decadence Brownie mix.

Other Maya products are Original Hotcake, Complete Hotcake, Choco Fudge Brownie, Butterscotch Brownie, Crinkles, *Bibingka*, Banana, Chocolate Cake, among others.

Chicken may be a fixture on holiday tables but it does not have to be prepared the same way every year



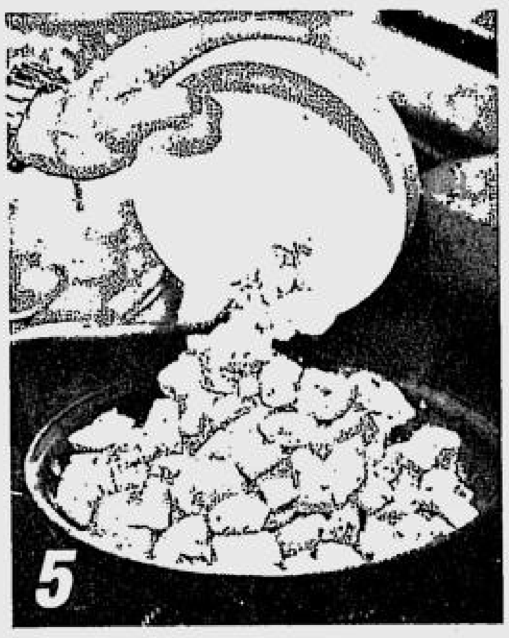
WHEN croutons become a bit soggy, remove from heat and add parsley.



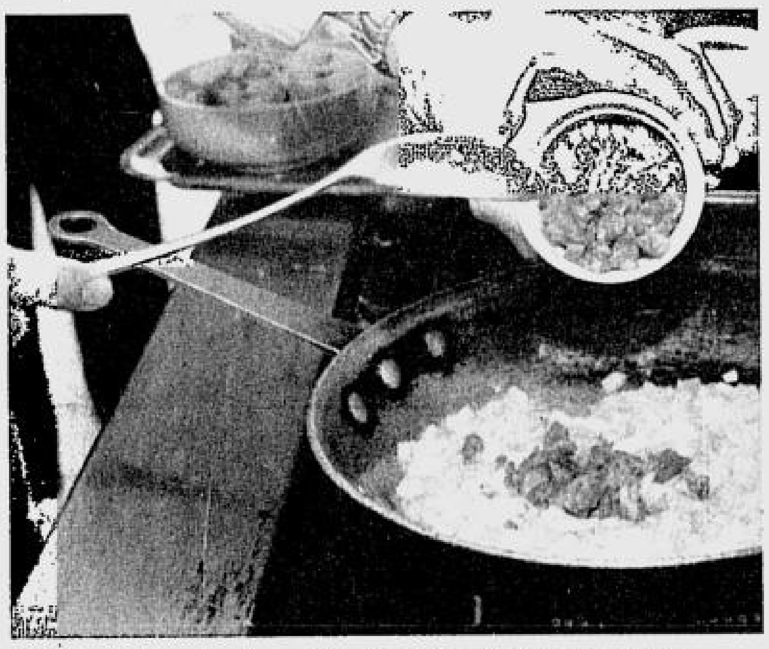
FILL chicken with the stuffing. Make sure the chicken is bursting at the seams as it will look thin after baking if not stuffed properly. Keep the excess stuffing.

COVER the opening with foil to prevent stuffing from coming out during baking.

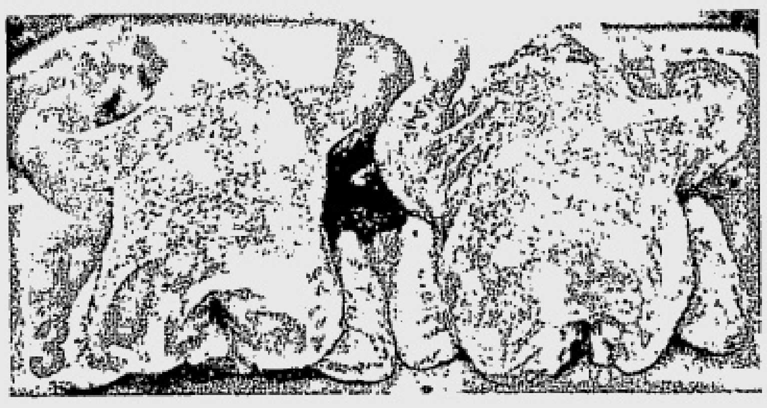
Traditional favorite gets new taste and look



ADD prunes and croutons. Add another ½ c chicken stock.



FOR the stuffing, heat pan with olive oil and butter. Add garlic, onions, celery, *chorizo*, apple and chestnuts. Season with salt and pepper. Pour 1 c chicken stock to the stuffing mixture.



RUB chicken skin with spice mixture.

FOR seasoning, mix together white pepper, paprika, garlic powder and salt.

PREHEAT oven to 400°F. Clean chicken and remove excess fat. Set aside.

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Ryan Lim

WHETHER it is baked, grilled, roasted or steamed, no holiday table is complete without at least one chicken dish.

But while there is no avoiding chicken, you do not have to confine yourself to the usual and familiar ways of preparing it especially for your New Year's Eve spread.

STEP BY STEP

The Holiday Baked Chicken with Chorizo, Prunes and Apple Stuffing gives a new look and flavor to an old favorite.

"On New Year's Eve, the family usually has a lot of food on the table to ensure abundance throughout the year. This is why the *media noche* meal is a virtual feast in most Filipino homes," says Rick Abasta, executive chef of Discovery Suites (tel. 6352222), 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

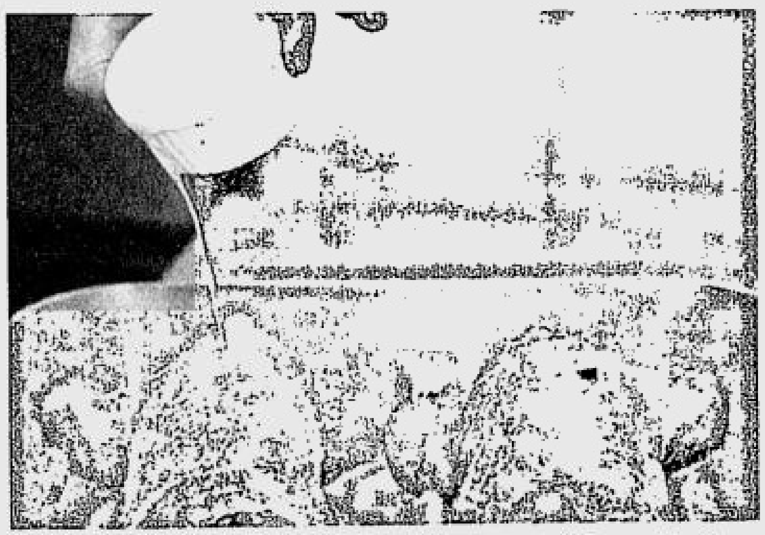
Abasta's baked chicken recipe is easy to prepare and, for stuffing, uses ingredients that are abundant during the season like apples, chestnuts and prunes. He adds croutons and chorizo to make the dish more filling and flavorful.

When baking the chicken, says Abasta, avoid opening the oven too often because it will slow down the cooking process. To find out if the chicken is ready, prick the deepest part of the chicken—the thigh. If the juice comes out clear without a trace of blood in the flesh, then the chicken is done.

When serving the baked chicken, put the excess stuffing on the plate and garnish with buttered vegetables. Drizzle chicken with gravy and sprinkle with more parsley on top.

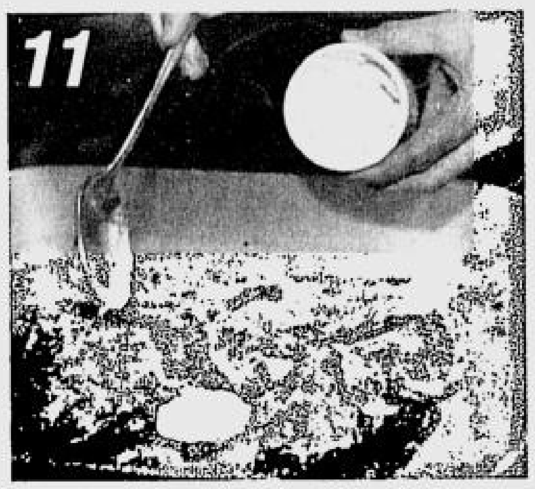
Ingredients:
2 whole chickens
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp salt
1 tsp white pepper
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tbsp butter (for deglazing)
3 tbsp flour
1 tsp tomato paste
For stuffing:
¼ c olive oil
¼ c butter
2 c croutons
1 tbsp garlic, coarsely chopped
½ c chestnuts, peeled and coarsely chopped
½ c white onions, coarsely chopped
½ c celery, chopped
½ c chorizo, cut into small pieces
1 tbsp parsley, minced
½ c prunes
1 apple, cored and cut into cubes
3 cups chicken stock (1 ½ cup for stuffing and 1 ½ cup for gravy)
For garnishing:
1 bundle asparagus, cut the tough bottom portion
1 zucchini, cut into medium slices
. 1 carrot, peeled and cut into medium slices

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

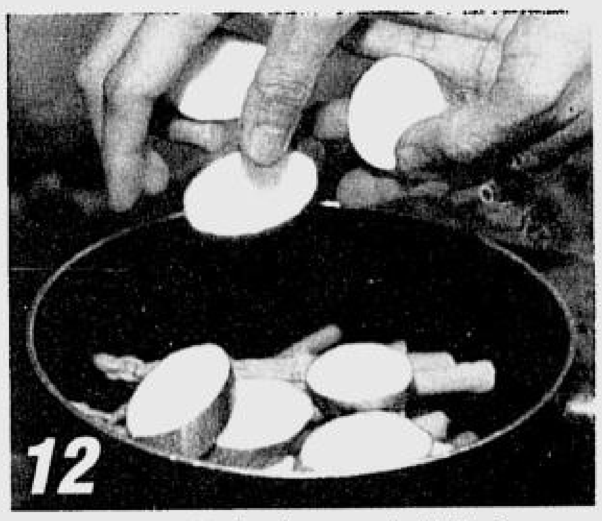


BEFORE baking, grease pan lightly with butter or oil. Pour a bit of olive oil onto the chicken to prevent it from drying.

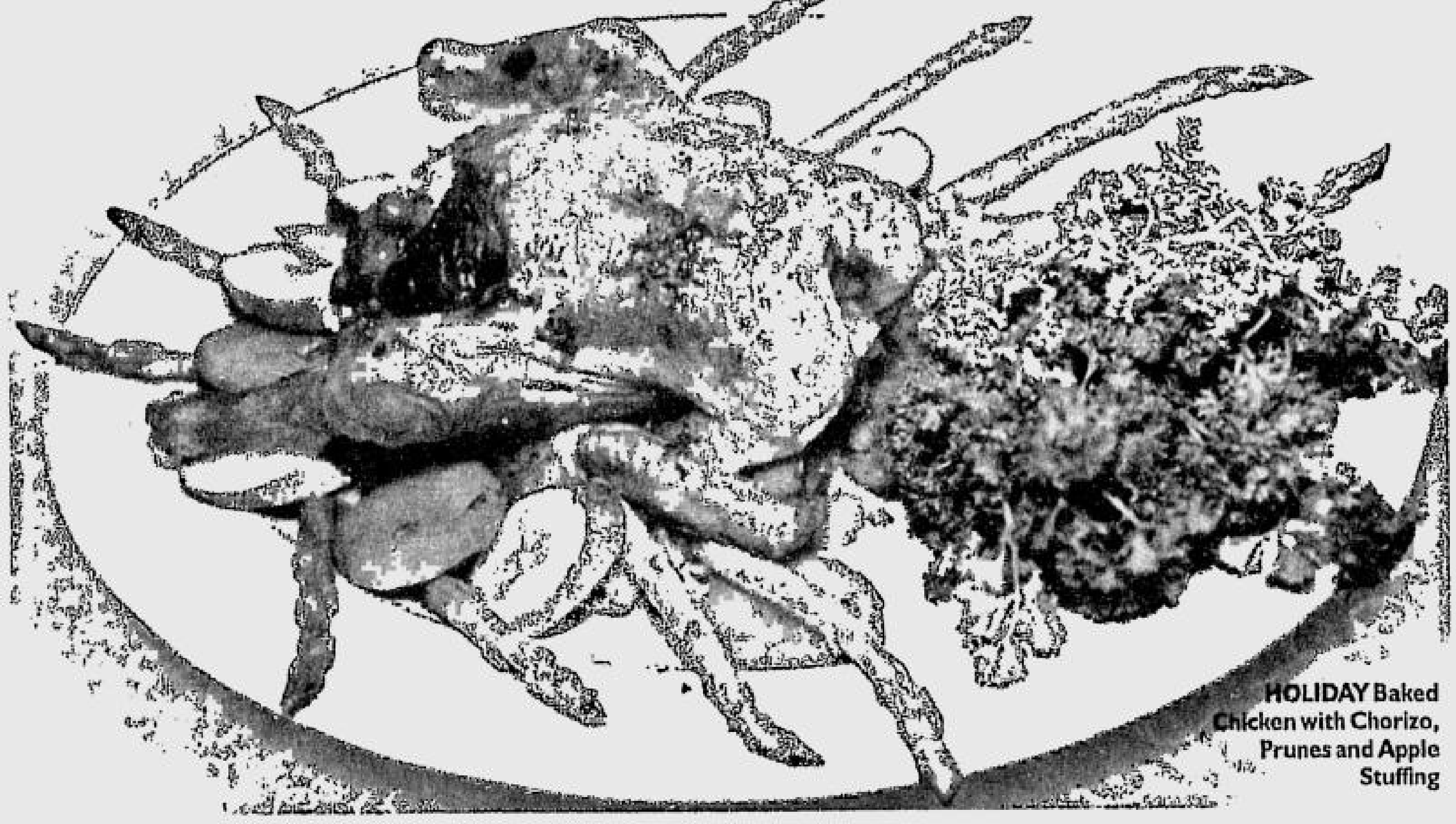
BAKE chicken for 30 to 40 minutes.



TO make the gravy, use the chicken fat from the baking pan and add 1 tbsp softened butter. Mix well. Add 3 tbsp flour, 1 tsp tomato paste and 1 ½ c chicken stock. Mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste. Strain the gravy for a smoother texture.



FOR garnish, melt 3 tbsp butter and add sliced vegetables (asparagus, zucchini and carrots). Cook for about 5 minutes.



HOLIDAY Baked Chicken with Chorizo, Prunes and Apple Stuffing

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Sleepless over 'Lastikman'

By Nini Valera

DIRECTOR Mac Alejandre has not had a full night's sleep for at least 90 days.

Before the Metro Manila Film Festival opened last Christmas Day, Alejandre said he would not have that sleep until he finished post-production work on "Lastikman," the Mars Ravelo superhero which he brings to life on screen for the film fest.

On the set of the movie, Alejandre told INQUIRER Entertainment that losing sleep over the movie was the least of his sacrifices. It's not also the first time that Alejandre, who also directs "Joy Ride" for GMA 7 as well as television commercials, has lacked sleep.

"I feel super blessed, extremely blessed to be this busy," said Alejandre without any trace of sleep -deprivation in his speech and manner. "I feel so blessed because I work regularly in three media—film, TV and commercials. I am also excited to be starting my fourth film for this year also this month."

Small films

"Lastikman" is Alejandre's second effects-laden film. His first is "Captain Barbell." He is proud he finished both movies under budget.

"My training is short films," he explained. "Since that's my training, I am used to having no budget. I am used to begging, borrowing and stealing. I am used to scrimping on the number of rolls of films. I never expected to be directing big budget movies like this. So when I'm given a big budget, I am actually amused.

"I'm very comfortable with small films. I'm very, very comfortable with story-driven, small films. Actually, I like doing small films a lot. I am a director who is known for being cost and time efficient, meaning I already know the parameters of my producer so budget has never been an issue with me.

"What happens is this. I get a project, the producer sets the parameters and I find the ways and means to stay within the parameters."

Many times, he has gone below budget, Alejandre claimed.

"For 'Singles' and 'Liberated,' I used only 40,000 feet of film. I did 'Barbell' with only 57,000 feet of raw stock. The first two movies are dramas, very small-scale films."

Less stars, more money

Before "Lastikman," "Barbell" was Alejandre's biggest movie, which he did under P30 million.

"'Lastikman' has a slightly lower budget, but basically it is in the vicinity of 'Barbell,'" he revealed. "The stars might not be as big as Bong Revilla, but more money was put into the effects."

More than 150 3-D effects were lavished on "Lastikman," the most number of computer effects used in a local movie so far, surpassing only the effects of "Barbell," according to him.

"The industry has come to realize that Christmas is indeed for children, so movies like 'Lastikman' and 'Barbell' were made for them," he said. "That's why there are so many special effects.

.Nevertheless, he added, the special effects are only secondary to the movie's young stars, Mark Bautista and Sara Geronimo.

Mark exceeded his expectations, said Alejandre. "He gave more than what I expected. I was expecting youthful energy, vibrancy, since he's new and those [qualities] are common in young actors. But he surpassed my expectations on two counts. First, he can act far better than what I envisioned he could deliver. Ten minutes into the film you'd want to hug him."

He described Mark as a "*probinsyano* at heart" with a naiveté that, when combined with his depiction of the mortal alter ego of the superhero he portrays, "comes out so refreshing."

SUPER BLESSED. Director Mac Alejandre (in shades) says he's "extremely blessed" because he is doing commercials, television and movies, including "Lastikman" for the ongoing Metro Manila Film Festival, which stars (from left) John Manalo, Bearwin Meily and Mark Bautista (also above).

13 years with 'bagets'

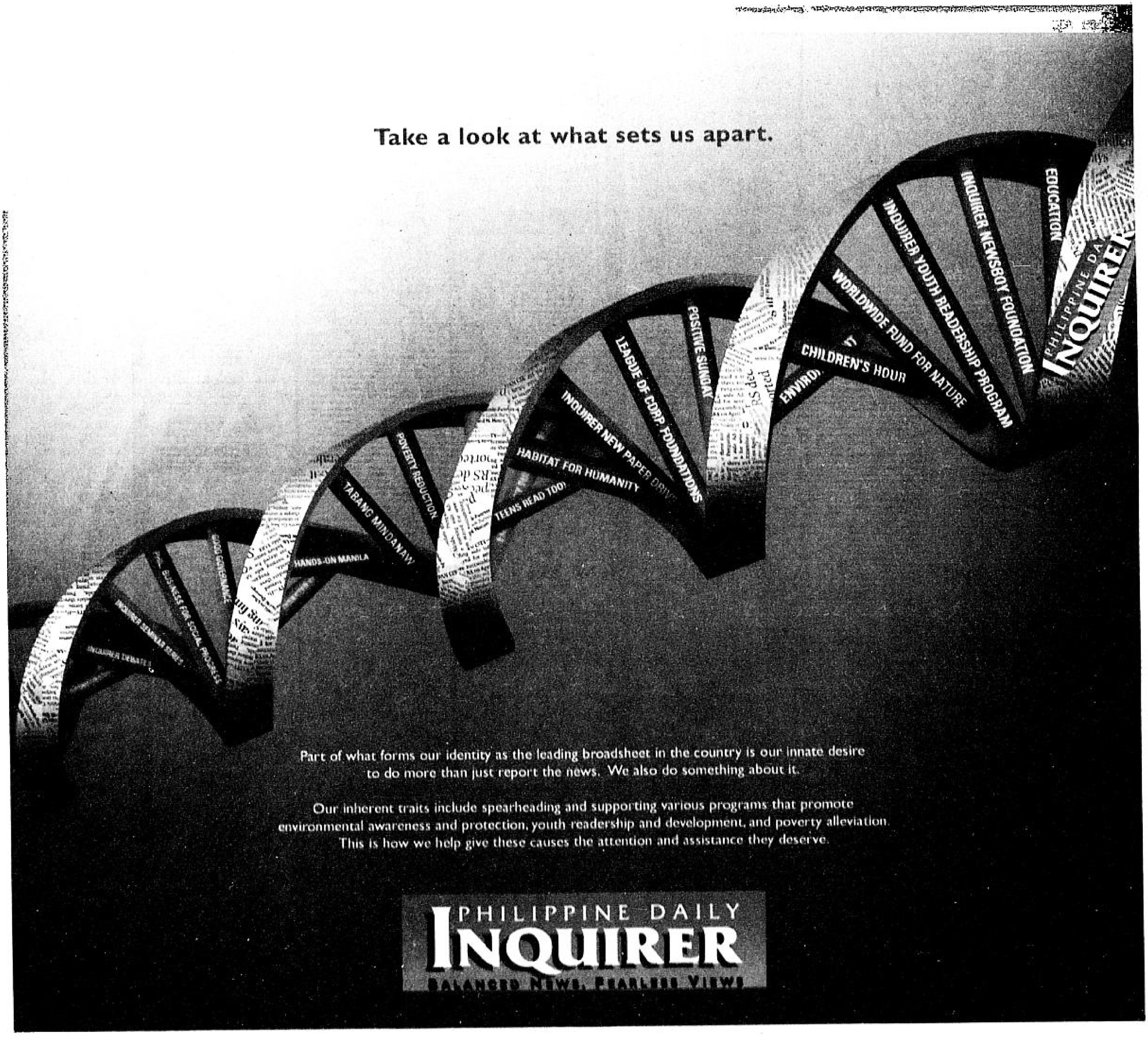
Working with talents as young as Mark and Sara poses no problem with Alejandre, who claimed he's "very, very young, feels young and thinks young."

"I get along with them with great training," said the director. "I've done *bagets* TV shows for 13 years. I've handled movies with *bagets* in the cast. I handle them honestly, sincerely, telling them honestly what there is to say. Just tell them the truth.

"They are not necessarily money-driven. Money is only one aspect for them. For Sara and Mark, we know that the capacity to earn is a big portion of this industry. But, I think that is just a small part of the motivation for them. What they want really is the idealism of making it. All of us know that because we were their age once.

"Mark, for example, knows how impor-

SLEEPLESS/2



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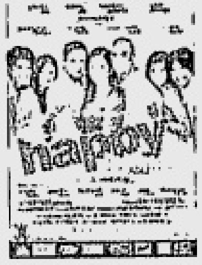
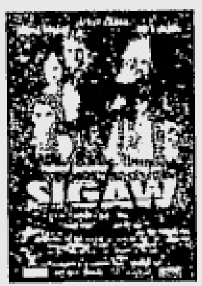
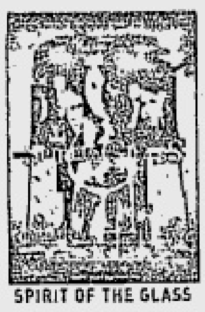

SO HAPPY TOGETHER

LATIKMAN

MANO PO


SIGAW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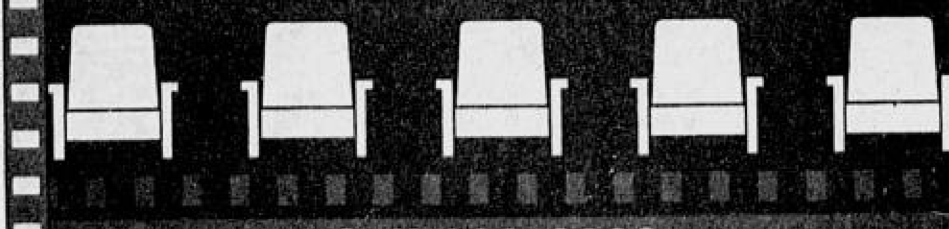

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Cruzin' at Merk's on New Year's Eve

IT'S CRUZIN,' not Cruising.

Groove to the sound of the newly formed Latin band from the famous Cruz family. Carding Cruz Jr., son of the famous bandleader Carding Cruz of the Bayside era, is back with his own nine-piece band, with members handpicked by Carding Jr. himself.

Carding Jr. had his own eight-piece band back in the '70s at the Top of the Hilton. The group did all kinds of music, from standards to pop to jazz to disco, and always Latin in between.

SHOW TIME

CRUZIN' BAND plays pop, dance, retro and most of all, Latin, from Mendes to Martin.

Carding has come full circle and formed this band composed of Jun Austria, one of the best drummers in the local music industry; John and Toby of the brass section; Simmon Tan, session jazz and all-around bass player and a young and upcoming musician, Egay, on conga and percussion.

Doing the lead vocals are Vicky Posadas (Romy Posadas' sister and Carding's wife) together with longtime band member, Allen, another experienced vocalist. They are joined by male vocalist Rocky. Carding is on the piano and synthesizers.

Enjoy the soothing melodies of the Cruzin' Band—Latin beats, from Sergio Mendes to Tito Puente, from Gloria Estefan to Ricky Martin.

The the group also plays pop and dance music and some '70s hits.

The Cruzin' Band performs at Merk's Bar Bistro on New Year's Eve.

Merk's Bar Bistro is on the third level of Greenbelt 3 at the Ayala Center in Makati City.

For reservations, call 757-4720 or 575-4721.

Sleepless over 'Lastikman'

From page 1

tant this project is to him not only as a singer, but also as an actor. This is his first lead role. I am very sure, money is not his motivation. That is only a small speck in the entire spectrum of things.

"He wants to do good because he feels he can do it. This still poses a challenge for him because this would dictate who he would be in 2005 and in the years to come. This is a test case for him. He knows where to position himself. He knows the difficulties in positioning himself because he's just starting out as a singer and he's now entering the movies so it's a whole new and big challenge for him. And he works so hard, and he is so dedicated."

All have the power

Of the character that Mark plays, the director said, "In a sense, Mark's 'Lastikman' appears to be weaker than the villains. I think we've met our objective—to effectively communicate not only Lastikman as a Pinoy superhero but also the sincerity of his mortal alter ego that beyond the superhero is the importance of the realness of the world of this young people.

"It's so simple, the premise, that all of us are given the power in whatever term and it's up to us to decide how to use this power."

Alejandre himself draws from whatever power God had given him. Born to a poor family, he grew up in Murphy, Cubao living the first years of his life in a house where four other families lived and where one could shake hands with the next door neighbors when looking out of the windows.

His next home was an apartment with big rats. It was in this squalor that Alejandre discovered the magic of Mars Ravelo's comic book characters, like Captain Barbell, Lastikman and Darna.

Growing up on classics

"Making this movie has rekindled childhood memories," Alejandre admitted.

That he was able to rise above the squalor of poverty Alejandre owed to his mother, Lolita, a teacher in New York City, he said.

"She taught her children the value of education. Thanks to a relative who saw promise in me, I spent only three years in a public school. The rest of my education was in private schools, and college in the University of the Philippines."

He would have been a doctor if the movies had not waylaid him.

"I enjoy directing in whatever form," he said. "I enjoy working in three media simultaneously. I enjoy the art of doing based on objectives. Of course, cinema is close to my heart. I grew up watching film classics. I would always want to do such films. Unfortunately, I have not yet been given the opportunity to do so. I say that without regret."

Even in his present state of sleeplessness, Mac Alejandre feels like a complete person.

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1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
4	HAPPY TOGETHER
5 (DOLBY)	LASTIKMAN
6	SIGAW

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Boom opens at noon

BOOM na Boom Carnival will open its gates at 12 noon instead of 4 p.m. on Saturday, New Year's Day, in anticipation of another huge holiday crowd.

Activities have been lined up to entertain New Year revelers, highlighted by the "Hataw Sayaw" dance contest grand finals at 10 p.m. after the performances of the China Youth Acrobatic Troupe. There will also be marching bands, clowns on stilts and street magicians throughout the day and a magic show in the evening.

On Friday, Dec. 31, there will be a showdown among dance groups at the stage area, following the 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. performances of the China Youth Acrobatic Troupe.

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SIGAW PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	**ENTENG KABISOTE** GP 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30	**SPIRIT OF THE GLASS** PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:00
LASTIKMAN GP 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	**AISHITE IMASU 1941** PG13 1:20,3:35,5:50,8:05,10:20	**MANO PO 3** GP 12:40,3:00,5:20,7:40,10:00

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star group of cinemas movie guide

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4 Sigaw	2 Spirit of the Glass	2 Aishite Masu
5 Panaghoy sa Suba	3 Panaghoy sa Suba	
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1	MANO PO 3	11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30, 10:50	GP
2	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS	12:25, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:20	PG-13
3	ENTENG KABISOTE	12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:10	GP
4	HAPPY TOGETHER	12:05, 2:35, 5:05 7:35, 10:30	PG-13

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① MANO PO 3
FS 12:20PM, 2:45PM, 5:10PM, 7:35PM, LMF 10PM (GP)

② ENTENG KABISOTE
FS 11:20PM, 2PM, 4:40PM, 7:20PM, LMF 10PM (GP)

③ SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
FS 11:40AM, 2PM, 4:20PM, 6:40PM, LMF 9PM (PG-13)

④ HAPPY TOGETHER
FS 10:45AM, 1PM, 3:15PM, 5:30PM, 7:45PM, LMF 10PM (PG-13)

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LASTIKMAN	12:10 1:20 2:30 3:40 4:50 6:00 7:10 8:20 9:30
MANO PO 3	12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30
PANAGHOY SA SUBA	1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10
SIGAW	12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15
SO HAPPY TOGETHER	12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS	12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15

ALI MALL CINEMAS

3	Dolby	SIGAW	11:30 1:40 3:50 6:00 8:10
4	SDDS	ENTENG KABISOTE	11:15 2:10 5:05 8:00
5	dts	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS	11:30 1:40 3:50 6:00 8:10
6	Dolby	MANO PO 3	11:20 1:35 3:50 6:05 8:20
7	Dolby	PANAGHOY SA SUBA	10:20 12:45 3:10 5:35 8:00

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Jan. 2	Sun	2 PM, 6 PM
Jan. 3	Mon	6 PM

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ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SP: LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	AISHITE MASU (1941)
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3 & 4	NATIONAL TREASURE / BRIDGET JONES / SPIDERMAN 2 / SHREK 2
PREMIERE THEATRE	THE INCREDIBLES

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KALABIT
CINEMA-2	SALAT
CINEMA-3	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HAROLD & KUMAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BAD SANTA
CINEMA-12	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-14	HONEY
CINEMA-15	B'CUZ OF U

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-1	PASIYAM
CINEMA-2	BRIDGET JONES
CINEMA-4	POLAR EXPRESS

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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GALLERIA
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1 MANO PO 3 • THX 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	6 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 11:50 2:25 4:55 7:25 9:50	7 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
3 LASTIKMAN 11:50 2:25 4:55 7:25 9:50	8 AISHITE IMASU 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
4 SIGAW 11:40 2:10 4:40 7:10 9:40	9 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30
5 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00	10 MANO PO 3 11:30 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

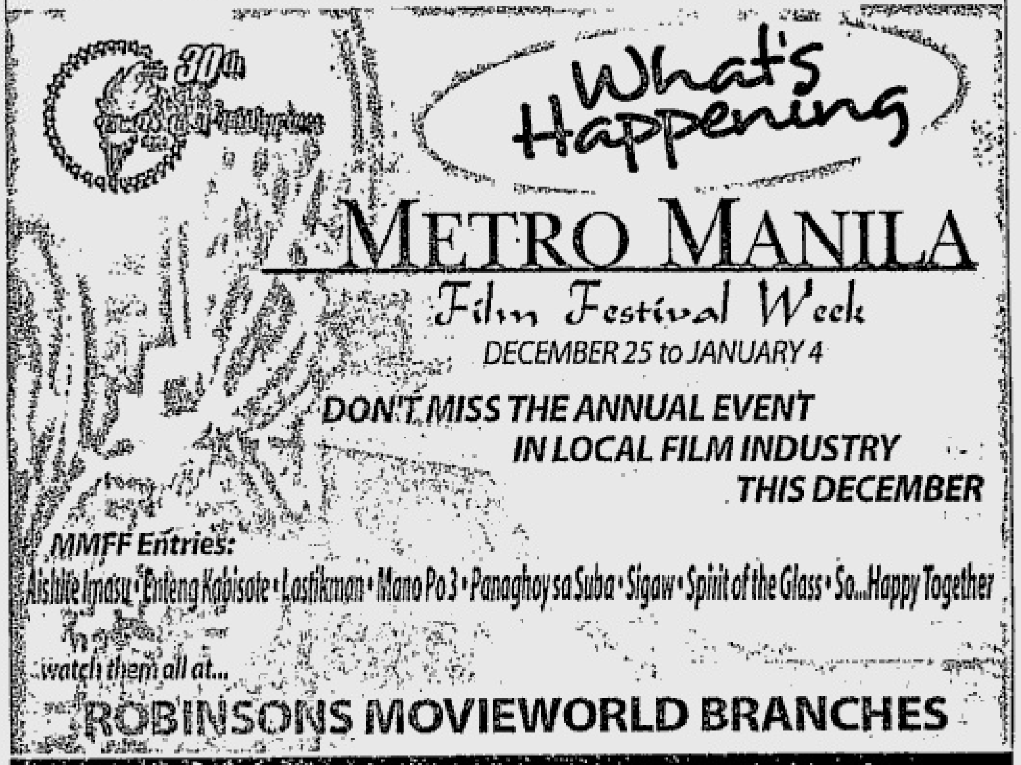
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 11:15 1:50 4:25 7:00 9:40	
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50	5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 AISHITE IMASU 10:10 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:50 10:00	6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 10:10 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:25 10:00
4 LASTIKMAN 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50	7 MANO PO 3 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST
682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 MANO PO 3 10:00 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:45 10:35	5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 10:35 1:00 3:25 5:50 8:15 10:30
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 10:10 12:40 3:10 5:40 8:10 10:30	6 LASTIKMAN 10:10 12:40 3:10 5:40 8:10 10:30
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 10:35 1:00 3:25 5:50 8:15 10:30	7 AISHITE IMASU 10:35 1:00 3:25 5:50 8:15 10:35
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00	8 SIGAW 10:00 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:45 10:30

NOVALICHES
935-3229/31

1 SIGAW 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 8:55
2 MANO PO 3 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
3 LASTIKMAN 10:15 12:45 3:15 5:45 8:25	7 ENTENG KABISOTE 10:15 12:40 3:15 5:50 8:25
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	8 AISHITE IMASU 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:00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Citisquare MALABON
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1 PANAGHOY SA SUBA 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 10:15 12:50 3:25 6:00 8:30
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 11:30 1:45 4:00 6:15 8:30	4 LASTIKMAN 10:50 1:15 3:40 6:05 8:30

CAINTA
240-4661

1 MANO PO 3 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	3 LASTIKMAN 10:35 1:10 3:40 6:10 8:40
2 SIGAW 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 10:35 1:10 3:40 6:10 8:40

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And the Oscar nominees ... are now being decided by 5,808 voters

LOS ANGELES—Nomination ballots for the 77th annual Academy Awards have been sent to Oscar voters as an end-of-year deadline looms for Oscar-hopeful films to hit the screen, organizers said Monday.

The 5,808 voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which runs cinema's highest honors, began receiving ballot papers last week, ahead of the Jan. 25 nominations announcement.

The ballots must be returned to Oscar auditors Pricewaterhouse-Coopers by 5 p.m. on Jan. 15 if they are to count toward the outcome of the nominations vote.

Voters began mulling their picks of hopefuls for categories including best picture, best actor, best actress and best director just as a key Dec. 31 deadline approached for movies hoping to qualify for next year's Oscars.

In order to be eligible for the Academy Awards, films must have played on screens in Los Angeles for at least seven days in 2004, prompting many filmmakers to wait until the last week of the year to release their movies.

But hopeful films must also have submitted an official screen credits form to the Academy by Dec. 1 in order to compete in next year's Academy Awards.

"Although a number of films begin the one-week qualifying run near the end of December, there are never any surprise entries in the Oscar race because the forms have already been received," said Academy president Frank Pierson.

Studios often release Oscar-hopeful films in the last weeks of the year in a bid to ensure that they are fresh in the minds of Oscar voters when they fill out their nominations and awards ballots.

The Oscars will be handed out on Feb. 27 next year. AFP

'Meet the Fockers' meets box-office bonanza

COARSE BUT WHO CARES? "Fokcers" stars (from left) Blythe Danner, Terj Polo, Barbra Streisand, Ben Stiller and Dustin Hoffman

LOS ANGELES—The all-star comedy sequel "Meet the Fockers" cleaned up over the Christmas weekend, raking in $46.1 million at the North American box office, final figures showed Monday.

It broke the record for the biggest Christmas day gross ever—$19.5 million—as well as the $19.4 million record for the largest gross for the day after Christmas, said Universal.

The film, a follow up to Universal's 2000 mega hit, "Meet the Parents," tells of the first hilariously disastrous meeting between two sets of new-in-law. Starring Robert de Niro, Ben Stiller, Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand, it is perfect fare for the annual rite of difficult family moments.

Awkward families

Box office trackers Exhibitor Relations Inc. released the figures for the lucrative holiday weekend lineup.

The movie marks diva Streisand's first movie role in eight years and reeled audiences in across the United States and Canada, grossing a total of $70.5 million since its opening on Wednesday. The previous record for a Christmas holiday opener was set by director Steven Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can," with $30 million in 2002.

De Niro plays the paranoid prospective father-in-law to the nerdy son (Stiller) of aging hippies (Streisand and Hoffman).

In 2000, "Meet the Parents," opened at No. 1 with $28.6 million on its way to $166 million. Both films were directed by Jay Roach of "Austin Powers" fame.

"Fockers" is a "warm and entertaining comedy about the awkwardness of families coming together," said Marc Shmuger, vice chairman of Universal Pictures. Although some critics complained about its coarseness, Shmuger said exit polling revealed negligible concerns among moviegoers.

Previous roster

Last week's box office leader "Lemony Snicket's A Series Of Unfortunate Events," starring Jim Carrey, slipped into second place, earning about $12.6 million.

The cartoon-turned-live action comedy "Fat Albert"—based on Bill Cosby's TV cartoon series in the 1970s—was third with $10 million.

In fourth place was Martin Scorsese's Howard Hughes biopic "The Aviator," which managed $8.6 million although it is showing only on a very limited release circuit in order to qualify as an Oscars contender.

NO. 10. "Phantom of the Opera," directed by Joel Schumacher and starring Emmy Rossum and Gerard Butler

The all-star crime adventure sequel "Ocean's Twelve" was fifth with $8.4 million. It stars George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Matt Damon and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

In sixth place was "The Polar Express," starring Tom Hanks in five different roles, with $6.5 million, followed by "The Darkness," which raked in $6.1 million.

Adam Sandler's poignant drama "Spanglish" was eighth with a haul of $4.6 million followed by the comedy "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou," starring Bill Murray and Cate Blanchett, with $4.5 million.

Rounding off the weekly top 10 was the screen version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera," which has grossed about $4 million since its debut Wednesday.

The figures are based on what the studio behind each film reports. The studios also track their rivals' films.

This weekend, in a twist on the usual practice of studios trying to outrank each other, "Fat Albert" distributor Twentieth Century Fox estimated its film was actually $1 million behind "Lemony Snicket."

Said Bruce Snyder, president of domestic distribution at the News Corp.-owned studio: "We're not trying to steal second place." *AFP, Reuters*

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⑤ Lastikman
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The famous and obscure join National Film Registry this year

WASHINGTON—Films teaching Cold War children to "duck and cover" during an atomic attack and describing how Oskar Schindler saved more than a thousand Jews from the Holocaust are being added to the National Film Registry.

Also being preserved: Elvis Presley and Rin Tin Tin.

They are among 25 films selected by the Library of Congress to the registry, which now holds 400 pictures.

Also on this year's list: movies starring Popeye the Sailor Man, Our Gang, Ginger Rodgers and Fred Astaire.

Librarian of Congress James H. Billington made the selections after evaluating nearly 1,000 titles nominated by the public and consulting staff and advisers, the library said.

"The films we choose are not necessarily the 'best' American films ever, made or the most famous," Billington said in a statement. Rather, they are chosen because they have "cultural, historical or aesthetic significance."

A film's selection recognizes its place in American film and cultural history, he said.

"The registry stands among the finest summations of American cinema's wondrous first century," Billington said.

CHARLTON HESTON as "Ben Hur"

This year's selections span a wide cinematic range and include both obscure and well-known movies.

Among the better-known films:

"Ben Hur," the 1959 epic starring Charlton Heston, which tells the story of a Jewish prince who is betrayed and sent into slavery by a Roman friend, only to regain his freedom and come back for revenge. Its centerpiece: an action-packed chariot race.

"Duck and Cover," the 1951 landmark civil defense film seen by millions of schoolchildren in the 1950s. In the case of an atomic attack, children were advised to duck beneath a table or desk and cover their heads.

"Jailhouse Rock," which showcased Elvis Presley in ultimate rebel mode. The edginess in this 1957 film was toned down in later Presley pictures.

"The Nutty Professor," the 1963 film which some rank as comic Jerry Lewis' greatest.

"Schindler's List," the 1993 film based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, a factory owner in Nazi-occupied Poland who employed hundreds of Jewish workers and saved them from the Holocaust.

Lesser known films on this year's list include "Daughters of the Dust," the first feature-length film by a black woman to receive a wide theatrical release, and "Empire," Andy Warhol's eight-hour, one-shot stationary camera look at the Empire State Building.

The registry was established by Congress in the 1988 National Film Preservation Act, and each year, 25 movies are added.

The Library of Congress works to ensure that each film in the registry is preserved for all time. AP